



LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF

CALIFORNIA

SAN DIEGO

25

PR
4863
D6

158514

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

SIDELIGHTS ON
CHARLES LAMB

N.B.—The Frontispiece to this Volume is a facsimile of Lamb's poem of "The Three Graves," from an original manuscript in the possession of the Publisher.

Close by the ever-burning brimstone beds,
where Bedloe, Oates, and Judas hide their heads,
I saw great Satan like a Sexton stand,
With his intolerable spade in hand,
Digging three graves. Of coffin shape they were
For those who coffinless must enter there
With unblest rites. The shrouds were of that cloth
Which Clotho weaveth in her blackest wrath;
The dismal tint oppressed the eye, which dwelt
Upon it long, like darkness to be felt.
The pillows to these baleful beds were toads,
Large, living, livid, melancholy loads,
Whose softness shocked. Worms of all monstrous size
Crawled round; and one, upcoiled, that never dies.
A dismal bell, inculcating despair,
Was always ringing in the heavy air;
And all about the detestable pit
Strange headless ghosts, and guarder's forms did flit;
Rivers of blood from dripping traitors spilt,
By treachery stung from poverty to guilt.
I asked the Fiend, for whom those rites were meant?
"These graves", quoth he, "when life's short oil is spent,—
When the dark night comes, and they're sinking bedwards—
I mean for Castles, Oliver, and Edwards."

SIDELIGHTS ON CHARLES LAMB

BY
BERTRAM DOBELL

His office than the reaper's may be meaner,
But still some praise is due unto the gleaner

LONDON
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR
77 CHARING CROSS ROAD, W.C.
NEW YORK: CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

1903

Printed by Ballantyne, Hanson & Co.
At the Ballantyne Press

TO
E. V. LUCAS, ESQ.

Editor of
THE WORKS OF CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

A pleasant and a grateful task is thine,
Filling thy days with self-rewarding toil,
And nights with dreams wherein two spirits shine
Scarce freer *now* than *then* from earthly soil.
Happy are they thy loving care to gain,
Happy art thou whom fortune so has blest :
They would have loved thy cordial heart and brain,
And kinship to themselves in thee confessed.

Unlovely traits that cannot daylight bear
Too oft deep search in seeming goodness shows :
But thou mayst fearless seek, since only fair
Actions and thoughts thy delvings can disclose :
From every shadow of dishonour free,
Clear is their fame, and clear shall ever be.



PREFACE

"Among prose writers the very greatest name since Montaigne's is that of Charles Lamb. It is not that these are so much better than all others, but that in their own field of work they are always at their best. Therefore to collect every prose scrap of the most original, the most whimsical, and the most quintessential of English prose writers is to confer a boon upon English readers. For there is not a single newspaper paragraph by him in which the reader may not expect to come upon some delightful Lambism, rich with a flavour of 'self-pleasing quaintness,' to be found nowhere else."—*The Athenæum*, Jan. 12, 1878.

It was my intention to preface the following work by offering some remarks which might have been considered as an apology for one of its leading features ; but when I was about to sit down to the task, I chanced upon the passage which I have just quoted. It says, in

PREFACE

substance, nearly all that I had intended to say upon that point; and it is better perhaps that I should allow it to be said by another than by myself.

It is, of course, quite possible to disagree with the writer quoted as to Lamb's rank in English literature,—for there are a good many persons whom nature has not fitted to become devoted Elians. These will certainly demur—not indeed to the bracketing together of Montaigne and Lamb—but to the exaltation of the latter above all other prose writers. That is a claim which Lamb certainly would not have made for himself, and which it is not necessary even for his most ardent admirers to make for him. As Lamb said with regard to Clarkson, "*We should be modest for a modest man, as he is for himself.*" But few, I think, will disagree with the assertion that to collect every scrap of Lamb's prose is to confer a boon upon English readers. To this I would add that it is surely no less a service to collect every fact relating to him or his works which may now be recoverable. It is these two objects which I have kept in view throughout these pages. When I began my task I did not dream of being able

PREFACE

to make any considerable additions to Lamb's writings, or to our knowledge of him—and I was really surprised to find that so many gleanings had been left for me to gather up. Whether my readers will share the gratification which I feel at the outcome of my labours I cannot tell. But whatever errors I may have committed, and however severely they may be judged, I cannot conceive that I shall ever regret the time and the labour which I have bestowed upon my task. Nothing indeed but the charm—made up of "sweetness and light," humour, pathos and quaintness—which Elia casts over all who are fitted to appreciate him, could have induced me to spend so many hours and days in the researches which have resulted in the present volume.

It may perhaps be urged against me that I have bestowed more attention than they deserve upon matters of trifling importance. I do not expect, however, that this charge will be brought against me by any true Elians. Would any one complain of the triviality of the minutest of the facts I have recorded if they related to Shakespeare instead of Lamb? The question, of course

PREFACE

answers itself ; but I dare say I shall be told that Lamb is not Shakespeare. Quite so ; but I venture to say that there are many people who are no less interested in a new fact about Lamb than they would be in a new one about Shakespeare. With all his genius, there is nothing to hinder us from obtaining, if we desire to do so, a full comprehension of the character, and a complete appreciation of the writings, of Charles Lamb. That, it is hardly needful to add, is not the case with Shakespeare. The eye may penetrate the clear waters of a river, but not the depths of the ocean.

It may be less easy for me to defend myself from another charge which may be brought against me. I have certainly introduced some matters, which, however interesting in themselves, can scarcely claim to come within the scope of my proper theme, yet I am hardly disposed to apologise for their insertion. They deal, at any rate, with subjects and persons in which and whom Lamb was himself interested. To tell the truth, however, I must confess that I have inserted them rather because it pleased me to do so than for any more valid reason. I

PREFACE

found them in the course of my Elian researches, and thought it a pity not to make use of them. In the places whence I have taken them they were practically entombed : I hope some of my readers will think with me that they were worth disinterring.

It is by a rather curious chance that the present volume has come into existence. About two years since I came into possession of the remaining manuscripts of one of Lamb's closest friends—Thomas Manning. As soon as I had examined them I determined to make them the basis of a work relating to Lamb and Manning, and the Lloyds—for the collection, besides a large number of letters from and to Manning included also many epistles of Charles and Robert Lloyd. Before undertaking this task, it seemed necessary to acquaint myself as thoroughly as possible with the literature relating to Lamb and his friends. I had long had in my possession, waiting its turn to be examined, a set of the "London Magazine"—and to this I now applied myself. I soon perceived that there was much matter to be gleaned from its pages, which none of Lamb's editors had made use of ; and when I had finished my

PREFACE

study of it I found I had nearly enough material for a book, without drawing upon the Manning manuscripts. Other material, much of which only came into my hands while the book was passing through the press, began to accumulate in a rather remarkable way ; and I finally decided that it was best, on the whole, to use this matter before dealing with the Manning papers. From the latter, however, I hope soon to compile a second volume.

I must not conclude without acknowledging my great obligations to my friends, Mr. E. V. Lucas and Mr. G. Thorn Drury. I am indebted to both of them for many valuable suggestions ; and their counsel has enabled me to avoid many errors which I might otherwise have committed. If in some cases I have preferred my own judgment to theirs it has always been with a good deal of hesitation. I say this, because it would be unjust to allow it to be thought that they are in any degree responsible for errors or mistakes attributable to myself alone.

I have also to thank very sincerely Mr. A. Forbes Sieveking, who has kindly allowed me to make use as a cover-decoration of the

PREFACE

bust of Charles Lamb by the late A. L. Vago, which he commissioned that artist to execute. I think it will be acknowledged—so far at least as we are now able to judge—that the sculptor has very happily caught the likeness and the expression of his subject.

Another gentleman to whom I am indebted is Mr. W. C. Hazlitt, who gave me assistance on various points relating to his grandfather and T. G. Wainewright.

There is one small mistake in the book which I may as well set right here. In the chapter entitled "More about Wainewright and Lamb," I have stated that none of Wainewright's biographers seem to have known of the existence of his Bonmot booklet. I have since found that this is an error. The author of the account of Wainewright in the volume entitled "Twelve Bad Men" mentions the booklet, and makes some extracts from it.

CONTENTS

I

LAMB AND THE "LONDON MAGAZINE"

Lamb's genius best displayed in his contributions to the "London Magazine"—Its proprietors and contributors his personal friends—Brief account of the origin and history of the magazine—Account of John Scott, its first editor—His ability as an organiser and director—His unfortunate fate—The magazine becomes the property of Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, who make Thomas Hood its sub-editor—Hood's account of his connection with the magazine, and of its leading contributors—Lamb's friendship for him—Notes relating to the chief contributors to the magazine; J. H. Reynolds, Allan Cunningham, Thomas de Quincey, John Clare, T. G. Wainewright, Thomas Carlyle, and others—Hood's story relating (probably) to Carlyle—Lamb's opinion of Goethe—Failing fortunes of the "London Magazine"—its causes—Various complimentary references to Lamb in the magazine by Scott, Wainewright, etc.—Lamb's genius discerned and acknowledged by most of the critics and authors of his own time, but little appreciated by the reading public—Slow growth of his

CONTENTS

reputation and popularity—Thomas Griffiths Wainwright, his enigmatic character—Not the frivolous pretender he is usually represented—Various articles in the "London Magazine" which are now first assigned to him—"Janus Weatherbound"—Extracts from that article relating to himself, John Clare, and Lamb—His sympathetic and discerning tribute to the character and genius of the latter—The earliest and one of the best sketches which we possess of Lamb's personality—Elia defunct, a mystification got up by Lamb and Wainwright in the "London Magazine"—Short account of John Hamilton Reynolds—His "Literary Police Office, Bow Street"—His burlesque notices of Wordsworth and Lamb Pp. 1-54

II

HORACE SMITH'S IMITATION OF LAMB

Smith's paper in the "London Magazine" entitled "Death—Posthumous Memorials—Children" suggested by Lamb's "New Year's Eve," and evidently written in imitation of his style—Smith more successful in catching the manner of his model than Lamb's other imitators—Reprint of the essay
Pp. 55-73

III

SOME NEWLY DISCOVERED CONTRIBUTIONS BY LAMB TO THE "LONDON MAGAZINE"

My search for articles in the "London Magazine" by, or relating to, Charles Lamb—Unexpected results—Difficulty of deciding on internal evidence what is
xvi

CONTENTS

or is not Lamb's—His connection with the magazine commenced with the eighth number, in which appeared his "Recollections of the South Sea House," and a review of Bernard Barton's poems, which is now first attributed to his pen—Reprint of the review—Letter on the Quakers—Extract from a poem by Luke Booker—"Verses to Longman, Hurst Rees, Orme and Brown on their publication of Wordsworth's 'Excursion' in Octavo," now first ascribed to Lamb—A remarkable discovery—"The Confessions of H. F. V. H. Delamore, Esq.," now first ascribed to Lamb—The "Confessions" founded on a real incident in his life—Lamb on one occasion put in the stocks!—His "Reflections in the Pillory" probably suggested by this experience—"Dramatic Fragment" by Lamb, reprinted from the "London Magazine"—"The Miscellany" started in the "London Magazine" as a place of refuge for "small ingenious contributions"—Lamb a contributor to it—"Scraps of Criticism" now first ascribed to him—Remarks on passages in Gray's "Elegy" and "The Bard," and on a passage in Shakespeare's "Richard III."—Other extracts from "The Miscellany" which are apparently by Lamb—"The Choice of a Grave"—"Wilks"—"Obituary"—Note on "Milton"—Quotations from Lamb's letters relating to the "London Magazine" and his connection with it—His growing dissatisfaction with the manner in which it was being conducted—Its decline in merit and circulation—It passes into the hands of other proprietors, and is finally discontinued in 1829—Lamb's connection with it supposed to have ceased in 1825—Reasons for thinking this may not have been the case—Two papers published in the magazine in 1826, which if

CONTENTS

not Lamb's, are very remarkable imitations of his style—Reprints of these articles—"A Hint to Whist Players" and "An Appeal from the Shades"—The question discussed as to whether these papers were the work of Lamb or of an imitator—Evidence derived from a letter of Lamb's to Rickman which seems to show that the "Appeal from the Shades" was really written by Lamb—Another article in the magazine which may be Lamb's—Reprint of "The Sorrows of * * * *"—Sonnet on "The Ass"—The sonnet evidently suggested by Coleridge's poem, addressed "To a young Ass" Pp. 74-164

IV

SOME POETICAL TRIBUTES TO LAMB FROM THE "LONDON MAGAZINE"

Poems by Sir Charles Abraham Elton, B. W. Procter, Bernard Barton, and another, all reprinted from the "London Magazine" Pp. 165-186

V

SOME FURTHER GLEANINGS FROM THE "LONDON MAGAZINE"

Various selections from the "London Magazine," which do not all relate to Lamb—"Address spoken by Miss Kelly at the English Opera House"—Possibly by Lamb, but more probably by John Hamilton Reynolds—Notice of the death of Keats, reprinted from the "London Magazine"—"Note to Elia on the 'Passage in the Tempest,'" which Lamb had

CONTENTS

undertaken to explain—William Hazlitt's connection with the "London Magazine"—Some articles by him in the magazine which have not hitherto been ascribed to him—His review of "Peveril of the Peak"—His venomous attack on Sir Walter Scott's personal character—He did justice to Scott's genius in spite of his intense dislike of him—Hazlitt's personal and literary characteristics—His attack on Coleridge and Lamb's comment on it—Hazlitt's article on Scott the cause of much trouble to the proprietors of the "London Magazine"—A writer in "Blackwood's Magazine" makes a virulent attack upon them on account of its insertion—Taylor's reply to the attack—The temporary estrangement between Lamb and Hazlitt some time between 1814 and 1823—One of the causes of this estrangement now first suggested—Hazlitt suspects Lamb of plagiarising from him—The Philadelphia edition of the second series of the *Essays of Elia*—Essays contained in it which are not by Lamb, but by Allan Cunningham and B. W. Procter—Quotations from these articles—Motto by Elia to "The Bride of Modern Italy"—Many poems and prose articles in the "London Magazine" by Thomas Hood, which have not hitherto been ascribed to him—His "Ode to Master Izaak Walton"

Pp. 187-226

VI

MORE ABOUT WAINEWRIGHT AND LAMB

Wainewright a more voluminous writer than has hitherto been supposed—His "Egomet Bonmot" booklet—Its revelations of his personal and literary peculiarities—Quotations from it—The clues which it

CONTENTS

furnishes to his various contributions to the periodicals of the times—Lists of his (supposed) contributions to “Blackwood’s Magazine” and to “Northouse’s London Magazine”—Lamb’s allusion to Wainewright in his essay on “The Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis”—Curious reference to Lamb by Wainewright—Was Lamb the chaunter of “Diddle, diddle dumpkins”?—The question discussed in a manner befitting its importance—Egotism and vanity not always identical qualities—Wainewright, though an egotist, not blind to his defects, as a merely vain person would be—The two “London Magazines,” Baldwin’s and Northouse’s—Wainewright a contributor to both, and probably the author of papers in the latter which bear the signatures of “Sam Quiz” and “Paul Clutterbuck”—Parodies by “Sam Quiz” of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Colman, &c.—“The Literary Ovation, or the Row in an Uproar,” by Paul Clutterbuck—Its curious references to Lamb and Hazlitt—Hazlitt’s “Pindaric” on himself—“Songe to Fancy, by good Master Webster,” sung by Lamb—The merits of the magazines of the time compared—Remarks on “The Literary Ovation”—Hazlitt on Wainewright (note). . . Pp. 227–293

VII

GLEANINGS FROM “THE MONTHLY REPOSITORY”

Some articles relating to Lamb in “The Monthly Repository” for 1835, which have been hitherto overlooked—“An Evening with Charles Lamb and Coleridge”—“Morning, Noon, and Night,” a poem

CONTENTS

by "S. Y.," author of the foregoing article—"Musical Commentaries and Correspondence of the late Charles Lamb"—A letter from Lamb to Hazlitt—Review of Lamb's "Rosamund Gray, &c."—Character of Charles Lamb by Coleridge—Lamb's letter to Hazlitt on the birth of his son . Pp. 294-328

VIII

GLEANINGS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

A precursor of Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare"—"The Enchanted Mirror"—"The Adventures of Telemachus"—"Mr. H——"—A notice of its performance, &c.—Lamb's letters to Manning—"Stories after Nature," by C. Wells—Daisy Pie—Lamb a yearner after mountain scenery and a country life!—Extracts from an article and a poem on Lamb in the "Oxford University Magazine"—Remarks upon them—Sonnet on Lamb by Sir Egerton Brydges—Another Sonnet on Lamb—Verses on Lamb from "Temple Bar" Pp. 329-360

IX

LIST OF LAMB'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE "LONDON MAGAZINE"

Pp. 361-364

INDEX Pp. 365-371

SIDELIGHTS ON CHARLES LAMB

I

LAMB AND THE "LONDON MAGAZINE"

It was in the *London Magazine* that the genius of Charles Lamb displayed itself to the best advantage. It is not too much to say that but for its establishment (or rather re-establishment, for it was, when started in 1820, a revival of an old and long-popular magazine) we should have wanted much of his best and most characteristic work. Its proprietors—or, at least, the proprietors into whose hands it passed in 1821—became his personal friends, as did also nearly all the writers engaged

SIDELIGHTS ON

upon it. These latter were, perhaps, as brilliant a band of contributors as were ever engaged upon the staff of a magazine. All, or nearly all, of them were inspired with a feeling of admiration for Lamb's genius, and with warm personal affection for him, so that he was stimulated to do his best by the knowledge that he was sure of appreciation and applause from them, whatever might be his fate with the outer public. A brief account, therefore, of the fortunes of the magazine, and of Lamb's connection with it, will not, I hope, be deemed superfluous. It is a gratification to me—a gratification which will, I hope, be shared by the reader—that my researches have revealed a considerable number of hitherto unknown writings by Lamb, which I shall have the pleasure of now making known.

The first number of the revived *London Magazine* appeared in January 1820. Its original proprietors were apparently Messrs. Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, who were then publishers of considerable repute. Their leading idea appears to have been to render their new periodical a representative London, or English, magazine, as *Blackwood's Magazine*

CHARLES LAMB

represented Edinburgh, or Scotland. Whether the publishers were also the projectors of the periodical, or whether its first editor, John Scott, proposed it to them, I have been unable to discover. It is certain, however, that it owed almost everything to its first editor, whether he was or was not the projector of it. Successful editors are as much born, and not made, as poets ; and Scott, judging from his pioneer work on the *London Magazine*, was one of the ablest of them. Had he not been cut off so prematurely it can hardly be doubted that the magazine would have attained as permanent a success as *Blackwood's* or any other periodical of the time. A brief memoir of Scott, therefore, will not be out of place.

John Scott was born at Aberdeen in 1783. He was educated at the Marischal College, in that town, where Byron was his school-fellow. Very early in life he came to London, and obtained a place in the War Office ; but he soon abandoned official life in favour of literature and journalism. After two or three experiments in editorship, he was engaged by John Drakard as editor of the *Stamford News*.

SIDELIGHTS ON

On January 10, 1813, the first number of *Drakard's News*, which he edited from its commencement, appeared. In the following year its title was changed to *The Champion*. Lamb's acquaintance with Scott seems to have commenced in the latter year. In Dr. Birkbeck Hill's "Talks about Autographs," there is a letter from Lamb to Scott, which shows that the former was then contributing to the paper. His contributions, however, do not appear to have been of a notable or characteristic kind. The only one of them of any importance which can now be identified is the essay "On the Melancholy of Tailors." He warns Scott in the letter I have mentioned that he will have occasionally to wink at "briskets or veiny pieces," *i.e.*, articles of inferior quality. Great journalists are not much more plentiful than great poets; and it is no discredit to Lamb that he made only an indifferent one. The paper changed hands in 1816; and about two or three years afterwards it became the property of John Thelwall, a friend of Lamb and Coleridge, and a well-known radical orator and writer.

Under Thelwall's editorship Lamb contri-

CHARLES LAMB

buted to the paper some smartly written satirical verses, chiefly directed against the Prince Regent ; and a few epigrams, most of which were included in a selection of pieces from the paper, which was published by Thelwall in 1822 under the title of " Poetical Recreations of the Champion."

Between 1814 and 1819 Scott travelled a good deal on the Continent. As a result he published in 1815 "A Visit to Paris in 1814," and in 1816 "Paris Revisited in 1815 by way of Brussels, including a walk over the field of Battle at Waterloo." Thackeray described these books as "famous good reading"; and they elicited high praise from Wordsworth and other good judges. He made collections for the writing of various other books of travel, which his labours on the *London Magazine* interrupted. As an editor he was, I think, superior to any of his contemporaries. Talfourd describes him as "a critic of remarkable candour, eloquence, and discrimination," nor is his praise a whit too extravagant. He made none of the foolish mistakes which were made by such men as Jeffreys, Gifford, and Lockhart. When other editors were deriding

SIDELIGHTS ON

Wordsworth he had the courage to proclaim his belief that he was the greatest poet of the time—an opinion which, considering the then overwhelming popularity of Byron, was certainly not a common one. And yet he saw, as plainly as those who could see nothing else, what were Wordsworth's deficiencies. His article upon him in the *London Magazine* for March 1820, anticipated, in essentials, almost all that later critics have said about the author of "Lyrical Ballads."

Among the eminent writers whom Scott enlisted in the service of the *London Magazine* were Allan Cunningham, B. W. Procter, C. A. Elton, Rev. H. F. Cary, William Hazlitt, Horace Smith, Thomas De Quincey, and Thomas Griffiths Wainewright. The editor had not only discernment enough to recognise the great abilities of these writers, but also the art of so directing their talents as to turn them to the most profitable account in the interests of the magazine. I do not think that any one who looks over the early volumes of the *London* will dispute the truth of this observation. It was most unfortunate that just when Scott's labours upon the

CHARLES LAMB

magazine were beginning to bear fruit in its increasing popularity, an unkind fate arrested his career for ever.

In the latter part of 1820, and in the number of the *London Magazine* for January 1821, Scott, in consequence of some provocation which he had received from the writers in *Blackwood's Magazine*, published a series of articles in which he attacked with extreme severity the publishers and conductors of that periodical. He called it the *Mohock Magazine*, a title which stuck to it for some time afterwards. His articles are models of powerful argument and caustic invective. Scott, however, made one mistake. He attempted to fasten the responsibility for some specially objectionable articles upon certain individuals, among whom were Professor Wilson and J. G. Lockhart. The latter, whom Scott had attacked as being partly or wholly responsible for the editorial conduct of *Blackwood's Magazine*, sent him a challenge through a friend of his, Mr. Christie. Scott refused to accept the challenge, unless Lockhart consented to disavow his responsibility as editor of the magazine, or writer of the offensive

SIDELIGHTS ON

articles. This Lockhart refused to do ; and it seemed as though the matter was likely to come to an end with no more serious consequences than the exchange of a good many hard words. But Mr. Christie, as Scott thought, had exceeded his duties as a second by taking an active part against him in the quarrel ; and he therefore challenged him. In the result Scott and Christie met at Chalk Farm at nine o'clock on the night of February 16, 1821. Christie, it is said, went out resolved not to injure his adversary ; but, owing to the uncertain light, unfortunately wounded him mortally.* Scott died on February 27, leaving a widow and two young children. So fell, a sacrifice to a

* The reader may perhaps think that the above account of the duel is not so clear as it might be. It would require, however, more space than I can devote to it to give a wholly satisfactory account of the affair, which from first to last was mismanaged and muddled. As Lockhart eventually denied that he was responsible for the offensive articles which Scott imputed to him, or for the editorial conduct of *Blackwood's Magazine*, there seems to have been no good reason why he should not have given Scott an assurance to that effect, when the latter would either have apologised to him, or would have consented to meet him. It is due to Mr. Christie to

CHARLES LAMB

foolish custom, a writer from whom, judging from what he had already achieved, much might have been expected, and something perhaps that his countrymen would not have allowed to fall into oblivion.

It will be convenient here to give a short account of the fortunes of the *London Magazine* after the death of its first editor. Scott, as we have seen, edited only the first fourteen numbers of it. The impulse and the direction, however, which he had given it lasted for some time after his decease, though the want of his resourceful mind and masterful hand became more and more evident with each volume. The original proprietors, Messrs. Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, seem to

say that his conduct—according to the then prevalent code of honour—was entirely correct. He fired in the air at the first exchange of shots, and only aimed at Scott in the second encounter in self-defence. The seconds, Messrs. Traill and Patmore, should have interfered after the first exchange of shots and stopped the duel.

Mr. Andrew Lang, in his "Life of Lockhart," gives a long account of the affair, in which he has obviously striven, though not perhaps with entire success, to hold the balance evenly between the two parties.—See "Life and Letters of John Gibson Lockhart," pp. 250-282.

SIDELIGHTS ON

have despaired of obtaining another competent editor, and therefore disposed of their interest in the magazine to Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, whose names, as publishers, first appeared on the issue for August 1821. These gentlemen have a very honourable record, inasmuch as they were the original publishers of Keats's "Endymion," and of his last volume of poems ; as also of several of Hazlitt's works, De Quincey's "Opium Eater," the first series of Lamb's "Elia," &c. Taylor was a man of some literary talent, and one of the many persons who fancied that they had discovered the author of the Letters of Junius. He was the first writer who put forward the claims of Sir Philip Francis to the dubious honour of having written the famous Letters ; and he was also the author of various pamphlets on financial subjects. So far as the *London* was edited at all Taylor seems henceforward to have edited it, though the chief part of the labour of dealing with contributors, selecting articles, and generally of guiding its course, fell upon its sub-editor, Thomas Hood. In his "Literary Reminiscences," Hood has given us a most interesting account of his connection

CHARLES LAMB

with the magazine. It was the death of Scott which caused him to desert engraving, which had hitherto been his profession, for literature. The new proprietors of the *London Magazine*, he says, were his friends ; they sent for him, and installed him as a sort of sub-editor of their periodical. What followed had best be told in Hood's own words :

To judge by my zeal and delight in my new pursuit, the bowl had at last found its natural bias. Not content with taking articles, like candidates for holy orders—with rejecting articles like the Belgians—I dreamt articles, thought articles, wrote articles, which were all inserted by the editor, of course with the concurrence of his deputy. The more irksome parts of authorship, such as the correction of the press, were to me labours of love. I received a revise from Mr. Baldwin's Mr. Parker as if it had been a proof of his regard ; forgave him all his slips, and really thought that printers' devils were not so black as they are painted. But my top-gallant glory was in "our contributors." How I used to look forward to Elia ! and backward for Hazlitt, and all round for Edward Herbert, and how I used to *look up* to Allan Cunningham ! For at that

SIDELIGHTS ON

time the *London* had a goodly list of writers—a rare company. It is now defunct, and perhaps no ex-periodical might so appropriately be apostrophised with the Irish funereal question—"Arrah, honey, why did you die?" Had you not an editor, and elegant prose writers, and beautiful poets, and broths of boys for criticism and classics, and wits and humourists—Elia, Cary, Procter, Cunningham, Bowring, Barton, Hazlitt, Elton, Hartley Coleridge, Talfourd, Soane, Horace Smith, Reynolds, Poole, Clare, Thomas Benyon, with a power besides. Hadn't you "Lions' Heads, with Traditional Tales?" Hadn't you an Opium Eater, and a Dwarf, and a Giant, and a Learned Lamb, and a Green Man? Had not you a regular Drama, and a Musical Report, and a Report of Agriculture, and an Obituary, and a Price Current, and a current price of only half-a-crown? Arrah, why did you die? Why, somehow the contributors fell away, the concern went into other hands—worst of all a new editor tried to put the Belles Lettres in Utilitarian envelopes; whereupon the circulation of the Miscellany, like that of poor Le Fevre, got slower, slower, slower—and slower still—and then stopped for ever! It was a sorry scattering of those old Londoners! Some went out of the country: one (Clare) went into it. Lamb retreated to Colebrook. Mr. Cary

CHARLES LAMB

presented himself to the British Museum. Reynolds and Barry [Cornwall] took to engrossing when they should pen a stanza, and Thomas Benyon gave up literature.

It is with mingled feelings of pride, pleasure, and pain, that I revert to those old times when the writers whom I had long known and admired in spirit were present to me in the flesh—when I had the delight of listening to their wit and wisdom from their own lips, of gazing on their faces, and grasping their right hands. Familiar faces rise before me, familiar voices ring in my ears, and alas! amongst them are shapes that I must never see, sounds that I can never hear, again. Before my departure from England, I was one of the few who saw the grave close over the remains of one whom to know as a friend was to love as a relation.* Never did a better soul go to a better world! Never perhaps (giving the lie direct to the commoner imputation of envy, malice, and hatred amongst the brotherhood) never did an author descend—to quote his favourite Sir T. Browne—into “the land of the mole and the pismire” so hung with golden opinions, and honoured and regretted with such sincere eulogies and elegies, by his contemporaries. To him, the first of these, my reminiscences, is

* Hood is here, of course, referring to Charles Lamb.

SIDELIGHTS ON

eminently due, for I lost in him not only a dear and kind friend, but an invaluable critic ; one whom, were such literary adoptions in modern use, I might well name, as Cotton called Walton, my "father." To borrow the earnest language of old Jean Bertaut, as Englished by Mr. Cary :

Thou, chiefly, noble spirit, for whose loss
Just grief and mourning all our hearts engross,
Who seeing me devoted to the Nine,
Didst hope some fruitage from those buds of mine ;
Thou didst excite me after thee t' ascend
The Muses' sacred hill ; nor only lend
Example, but inspirit me to reach
The far-off summit by thy friendly speech.

* * * *

May gracious Heaven, O Honour of our age
Make the conclusion answer thy presage,
Nor let it only for vain fortune stand
That I have seen thy visage—touch'd thy hand !

A few notes are perhaps necessary to make some of the allusions in the above extract intelligible to the readers of to-day. Edward Herbert was the pen-name under which the contributions of John Hamilton Reynolds appeared. The Giant was Allan Cunningham and the Dwarf Thomas De Quincey, the former being of unusually tall stature, and the latter exceptionally short. The Green

CHARLES LAMB

Man was John Clare, the peasant poet, who was usually dressed in green, and who made a very odd rustic figure in that attire. Poole was John Poole, a busy magazinist and dramatist in his time, but now only dimly remembered as the author of "Paul Pry," a comedy in which Liston found the happiest opportunity for the display of his peculiar humour, and in which Mr. J. L. Toole has frequently appeared within living memory. "The Lion's Head" was the department of the magazine in which the editor chatted with his readers, and answered his correspondents. This was managed, after Scott's death, by Thomas Hood, and very amusing he made it. "Traditional Tales" was the heading of a series of stories which Allan Cunningham contributed to the magazine. As to Thomas Benyon I must own that I am unable to give any information about him ; nor can I trace any of his contributions to the *London Magazine*. No doubt they appeared under some *nom de guerre*.

It is rather curious that Hood makes no mention of four or five rather prominent contributors to the *London*. Perhaps it is no

wonder that he omits to mention the notorious Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, or "Janus Weathercock"; but it is not so easy to account for the omission of three others who were pretty frequent writers in the magazine. These were Richard Ayton, an essayist, who deserves to be better remembered than he now is; Peter George Patmore, the father of Coventry Patmore, and a writer of much versatility as journalist, magazinist (if that term is allowable), and novelist; and George Darley, a poet, dramatist, and critic, whose writings, if ever collected, as they deserve to be, would show how unjustly fate often deals out her awards.

Hood also omits to mention another writer who was destined to achieve a fame greater than that of all but one or two of the contributors to the magazine. This was Thomas Carlyle, whose "Life of Schiller" appeared first in the *London Magazine*, and who, if I am not mistaken, contributed other articles to its pages. But Carlyle, I suspect, was no favourite either with Lamb or Hood, who were no more likely to admire his jeremiads than he was to appreciate the vein of light and careless merriment which laid both of

CHARLES LAMB

them open, in the eyes of serious-minded people, to the accusation of being wanting in depth of feeling and earnestness of thought. I do not think it has ever been noticed before that there is a passage in Hood's "Literary Reminiscences" which, I believe, refers to Carlyle, and which, if it does, fully accounts for the bitter and virulent remarks about Lamb, which have perhaps done more to alienate the sympathies of sensitive readers from the Chelsea Jeremiah than all the rest of his offences against good feeling and good taste.

Lamb, whilst he willingly lent a crutch to halting Humility, took a delight in tripping up the heels of Pretension. Anybody might trot out his Hobby ; but he allowed nobody to ride the High Horse. If it was a High German one, like those ridden by the Devil and Doctor Faustus, he would chant :

"Gëuty, Gëuty
Is a great Beauty,"

till the rider moderated his gallop. He hated anything like Cock-of-the-Walk-ism ; and set his face and his wit against all Ultraism, Transcendentalism, Sentimentalism, Conventional Mannerism, and above all, Separatism. , In

SIDELIGHTS ON

opposition to the Exclusives, he was emphatically an Inclusive.

Lamb, who had no knowledge of the German language, had a very poor opinion of Goethe, and particularly of his "Faust," perhaps because there was then no translation of the poem which was not a "traduction," with the exception of the fragments which Shelley had rendered into English. Writing to Harrison Ainsworth on December 9, 1823, Lamb says :

I thoroughly agree with you as to "The German Faust," as far as I can do justice to it from an English translation. 'Tis a disagreeable canting tale of seduction, which has nothing to do with the spirit of Faustus—Curiosity. Was the dark secret to be explored to end in the seducing of a weak girl, which might have been accomplished by earthly agency? When Marlow gives *his* Faustus a mistress, he flies him at Helen, flower of Greece, to be sure, and not at Miss Betsy, or Miss Sally Thoughtless.

With these opinions it is easy to understand that Lamb must have listened to Carlyle's disquisitions upon Goethe and other German

CHARLES LAMB

authors with a good deal of impatience, and that he was even guilty of breaking in upon them with the irreverent chaunt which Hood describes.

It is hard for me to refrain from quoting much more from Hood, and particularly from giving in full his description of a typical meeting of the contributors to the *London* at the hospitable dinner-table of the publishers. Hood is but little read nowadays, so that were I to quote all that part of the "Literary Reminiscences" which relates to Lamb and the *London Magazine*, it would be new to three-fourths of my readers ; but "Hood's Own" is a very accessible book, and therefore I refrain.

The *London* seems at first to have prospered under Messrs. Taylor and Hessey's management ; but after a year or two the want of a capable editor, and the other causes which Hood enumerates, began to tell upon its fortunes. It still contained many excellent articles, and it was difficult to say exactly what was wanting in it ; but every one felt that there was a falling-off in its attractiveness. Under Scott's management the talents of the contributors were

SIDELIGHTS ON

so used as to advance the general good of the magazine, whereas under the new management each contributor appeared to be striving only for himself. So may a very talented company of actors, each individually excellent, but careless of the general effect, give a much less satisfactory representation of a play than an inferior company which has been schooled by a competent stage-manager to work together so as to produce a smooth and harmonious performance.

It does not seem that Lamb, though he was already known to Scott as a contributor to the *Champion*, was enlisted from the first among the contributors to the *London Magazine*. At all events I cannot discover any article from his pen in the first seven numbers.* There are, however, two or three allusions to him in the first volume which are worth a passing notice. The first occurs on page 85. The writer—apparently the editor—in reviewing Procter's

* It has been said that Lamb first became a contributor to the *London* on Hazlitt's recommendation of him to the editor. I do not think, however, that this can have been the case, inasmuch as Lamb had become known long before to Scott, and (as we shall see) was thoroughly appreciated by him.

CHARLES LAMB

"*Sicilian Story*" speculates as to what real personality is hidden behind the pseudonym of "Barry Cornwall." He is not, the writer decides, either Leigh Hunt or Southey—

Nor is Mr. Cornwall Mr. Lamb. We have heard it said that he is. If so we are block-heads. It appears to us that he has much of Mr. Lamb's feeling, and love of simplicity and pathos, and familiarity with the gentle and sorrowful things of the world ;—but he has not Mr. Lamb's imagination or depth, nor has he quite so extensive a sympathy with humanity. He wants the "something far more deeply interfused" which we find in Mr. Lamb's pieces.

The next allusion to Lamb appears in one of Wainewright's "*Janus Weathercock*" articles. On page 406, after describing an engraving by Julio Bonasoni, he says, in a note :

We think we know one bard, an ardent admirer of nature, animate and inanimate, yet no lover of underbred, colloquial, city vulgarisms ; in short, a *genuine* descendant from the Elizabeth stock, who will thank us for introducing this elegant stranger to him (if, indeed, they are not already acquainted). Should our

SIDELIGHTS ON

choice gain the mede of *his* approbation, we should not heed a jot the blind gabbling of a million of cold matter-of-fact critics, or *soi-disant* artists. . . .

In the same article the writer quotes some lines from Lamb's translation of Thecla's song "The clouds were blackening," &c.

It was in the number for August 1820, that Lamb's first contribution to the magazine appeared. This was "Recollections of the South Sea House," a brilliant beginning to the series of essays which appeared above the signature of "Elia," which was then used for the first time. In the appendix to the present volume I give a list of all Lamb's known contributions to the *London Magazine*, and therefore it is unnecessary to dwell upon them here. All that I need say now is that some contribution or contributions from his pen appeared in nearly every number of the *London Magazine* from August 1820 to May 1825, with the exception of 1824, during which he contributed only three articles.

On page 277, of Vol. II., there is an article on the German writer, Lichtenberg's, descriptions of Hogarth's works. In the course of it there is a passage in which the

CHARLES LAMB

peculiar qualities of Lamb as a critic and essayist are so well and justly appreciated that it deserves quotation even now. It is possible that Lamb's genius may have since found more eloquent panegyrists ; but it is certain that it has found none who have praised it with greater insight and discernment. I think that the following extract will bear out my assertion :

The Germans boast that no Englishman has done so much as their countryman to honour the English artist : they are not aware of Mr. Lamb's exquisite essays, which are altogether of a far purer and deeper sympathy, with Hogarth's spirit than Lichtenberg's oddities. Mr. Lamb has too much real feeling, and it is of too true a stamp to be ever what can be called *whimsical* ! No writer ever yet united tears and smiles in such gentle, harmonious, delightful companionship—but this is always done by him easily and naturally, without the aid of affected contrasts or forced transitions. His is precisely the hand wanted to touch the works of Hogarth. On canvas and on copper they do everything for themselves ; but in print the representation, perhaps, gains something which is needful to it, by being seen reflected in the delicate yet sparkling medium of such a

SIDELIGHTS ON

sensibility as we have been describing. Mr. Lamb, as Hogarth's commentator, interferes with nothing, alters nothing, strains nothing of the original :—he takes no exceptions, offers no amendments ; but, in transfusing into words, giving “ a name ” to the graphical descriptions, the softening and elevating influence of his manner seems requisite to render the transfer as honourable as it ought to be to the genius of the immortal artist.

Lichtenberg had not Mr. Lamb's delicacy of mind and soundness of judgment. He is quaint and odd as well as susceptible and witty. His feeling of the various pieces is often truly deep and felicitous ; but it is not always a safe guide. He has, however, done much more on Hogarth, in point of quantity, than Mr. Lamb ; and this country has reason to be proud of what he has done, and gratefully to acknowledge it.

The next allusion to Lamb is found on page 317 of the same volume. It occurs in the course of an article on Keats which was probably from the editor's pen. The writer finds fault with the poet's handling of the story of “ Isabella, or the Pot of Basil,” comparing it unfavourably with the original story, as told by Boccaccio. Keats, says the

CHARLES LAMB

critic, has substituted for Boccaccio's faithful presentation of the case as between the brothers and their sister and her lover "a boisterous rhapsody, which interrupts the harmony of the sorrowful tale—repels sympathy by the introduction of caricature."

His device is a clumsy one : Boccaccio's delicate and true. That most beautiful Paper (by a correspondent, of course) in our last number, on the ledger-men of the South Sea House, is an elegant reproof of such short-sighted views of character ; such idle hostilities against the realities of life. How free from intolerance of every sort must the spirit be that conceived that paper :—or took off so fair and clear an impression from facts ! It would not be prone to find suggestion of invective in the sound of Sabbath bells, as Mr. Keats has done in a former work. The author of "Endymion" and "Hyperion" must delight in that Paper :—And to give another example of what we mean, he must surely feel the gentle poetical beauty which is infused into the starlight tale of Rosamund Gray, through its vein of "natural piety." What would that tale be without the Grandmother's Bible ? How eclipsed would be the gleaming light of such a character as Rosa-

SIDELIGHTS ON

mund's, in a remodelled state of society, where it should be the fashion for wives to be considered as dainties at a pic-nic party, each man bringing his own with him,—but ready to give and take with those about him."

Perhaps it is worth while to pause here in order to remark that while Lamb's genius met with full and ready recognition from nearly all his brother authors and from most of the critics of the time—differing in this respect from Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and others—it is singular that he was so little popular with the public at large during his life-time. While editions without number of Byron's works were pouring from the press, the sale of Lamb's writings was extremely slow and unremunerative. Excepting some of the children's books which he and his sister wrote or compiled for Godwin, I do not think that any of his works reached a second edition during his life-time, though Lowndes and Martin assert (wrongly, I believe) that the first series of "Elia" went into a second edition in 1833. "Rosamund Gray," it seems, was a moderate success; "John Woodvil" was printed at the author's expense, and he appears to have lost con-

CHARLES LAMB

siderably by it ; and the "Works" published in 1818 can hardly have enriched either author or publisher. Surely there was no excuse for the public neglect of the Elia essays, even if we allow that the other works I have named were not fitted to attract a large number of readers. I believe it is true that there was, at least up to the middle of the last century, a larger sale for Lamb's works in the United States than in England—surely a fact rather discreditable to his countrymen. Not till the second half of the nineteenth century was well advanced did editions of his works begin to multiply. Now no publisher is satisfied until he has included one at least of Lamb's books upon his list ; and soon it seems likely that he will be as often reprinted as Shakespeare himself. This is well, of course ; but one cannot help regretting that some share of his present popularity did not make itself manifest during his lifetime.

Of all the contributors to the *London Magazine*, the one who alludes most frequently, and perhaps most admiringly and affectionately, to Lamb is (strange to say)

SIDELIGHTS ON

that enigmatical being, Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, cleverest of coxcombs and prince of poisoners ! It was a strange irony of fate which brought together, in what must at one time have been a close intimacy, the man who, of all men, had in him the greatest and deepest spring of humanity, and the one whose actions were to prove that he was the most inhuman and remorseless of criminals. There is nothing stranger recorded in the history of mankind than the fact that this Napoleon of turpitude was able to impose himself upon the not undiscerning Charles Lamb—and not him alone—as a gay, kind-hearted, and even lovable being. Is it possible that he was then really what he seemed to be ; and that it was only in later years when he was involved in debt and difficulties that his character underwent so sinister a change ? *

Naturally enough, it has proved difficult for those who have written of "Janus Weathercock," to do justice to his real talents. Detestation of the poisoner has

* Did Stevenson derive the idea of his Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde from Wainewright ? Probably not—but he might very well have done so.

CHARLES LAMB

blinded the critics to his claims as an author. Usually he is dismissed as a trifler and a mere dabbler in art and literature. Had he been no more than this he could never have persuaded Lamb, John Scott, and other good judges, into a belief in him as a fine critic of art, music, and literature. That he did not reach a very high level of achievement is true—for that was impossible for him, and must be impossible for any one whose first object is to shine in the world of fashion and society—yet he was certainly not the frivolous pretender that he has been represented. It must be admitted, however, that some of his articles almost justify the worst opinion of him, for they are full of egotism, pretence, and affectation. Yet there was an intellect of real power at work behind the mask of frivolity which he chose to assume. His judgments on matters of art are generally sound ; and his taste in poetry was far better than that of most of his contemporaries.* He did not, it is true, escape the influence of his time ; and he

* It is observable, however, that many of his references to the poets are such as might have been derived from, or suggested by, his conversations with Charles

SIDELIGHTS ON

failed, in company with most of his contemporaries, to appreciate the genius of Beethoven, while he valued Fuseli as a painter far above his deserts.

Mr. W. C. Hazlitt, in 1880, collected the "Essays and Criticisms" of Wainewright, and prefixed to the volume the fullest account we have of the author's life. The collection includes the papers from the *London Magazine* which bear the signatures of "Janus Weathercock" and "Cornelius van Vinkbooms," and also two papers which are signed "Egomet Bonmot." There are other articles in the magazine however, which, in my opinion, may be pretty confidently ascribed to Wainewright. Of these the most remarkable is "The Memoir of a Hypochondriac," which appeared in the numbers of the magazine for September and October, 1822. If this be his—and the internal evidence which I find in it is to me conclusive—it proves that his literary powers were of much higher quality than would be thought by those who judge him only by his Weathercock and Vinkbooms papers. It is

Lamb. For instance, he refers frequently to Chapman's Homeric translations, styling the poet in one place, "Mr. Lamb's fine old favourite."

CHARLES LAMB

an essay of much autobiographical interest, and it aids us (in part, at least) towards a comprehension of the strange personality of its author, made up as it was of so many apparently incompatible elements. His mind, it is plain, hovered sometimes on the borders of insanity, and was at all times subject to abnormal impulses and distempered fancies. The essay was suggested by De Quincey's "Confessions of an English Opium Eater," to which, as a parallel and a supplement, it should be appended. Parts of it indeed might well have been written by De Quincey himself, and would certainly not have been thought unworthy of him.

Other articles which I attribute to the pen of Wainewright (though with less confidence) are : "On Riding on Horseback : " two articles with the signature of "Mazeppa " in the numbers of the *London* for January and March 1821 ; and "Letters from a Roué : " two articles in the numbers for April and June 1821.

Perhaps the best of the "Weathercock " articles is that entitled "Janus Weather-bound ; or, the Weathercock steadfast for lack of oil." This appears to have been his

SIDELIGHTS ON

last contribution to the *London Magazine*, and is somewhat in the nature of a valedictory epistle. In it he tells the history of his own connection with the magazine, and describes for us the characters of his colleagues and fellow contributors. This essay is less disfigured than usual by its author's characteristic defects ; or, at least, its matter is so interesting that we willingly pardon its faults of manner. From this article, inasmuch as Lamb figures largely in it, I propose to quote rather freely.

As a boy, Wainewright tells us, he was placed frequently in literary society ; but his giddy, flighty disposition prevented him from deriving any advantage from it. Afterwards he entered the army, where he was seduced from his love of art by the frivolous conversation and conduct of his brother officers. He remained, however, only a short time in the army ; and when he left it the pure influence of art once more affected him.

The writings of Wordsworth did much towards calming the confusing whirl necessarily incident to sudden mutations. I wept over them

CHARLES LAMB

tears of happiness and gratitude;* yet my natural impatience, and I may term it fierceness, was not altogether thereby subdued—rather condensed and guided against more fit objects, meanness, sordid worldliness, hardness, and real vulgarity in whatsoever rank it grew ; at least, in such degree as I was capable of distinguishing them. But this serene state was broken, like a vessel of clay, by acute disease, succeeded by a relaxation of the muscles and nerves which depressed me

—low

As through the abysses of a joyless heart
The heaviest plummet of despair could go,—

hypochondriasis ! ever shuddering on the horrible abyss of mere insanity ! But two excellent secondary agents, a kind and skilful physician, and a most delicately affectionate and unwearied (though young and fragile) nurse, brought me at length out of those dead

* Knowing what we now know about Wainewright it seems almost incredible that he could have been affected by the reading of Wordsworth's poems in the manner that he represents. Yet such is the complexity of human nature that it would probably be an error to dismiss the statement as mere cant or hypocrisy. A good many criminals have exhibited the union of apparently incompatible qualities which characterised Wainewright.

SIDELIGHTS ON

black waters, nearly exhausted with so sore a struggle. Steady pursuit was debarred me, and varied amusement deemed essential to my complete revivication. At this time the *London Magazine* was on the stocks ; and its late lamented editor, taking notice of my enthusiasm for art, and pitying my estate, requested me to put down on paper some of the expressions of feeling whereto I was from time to time excited by the mighty works of Michel, Raffaëlo, Correggio, and Rembrandt. With some modifications as to plan, I cheerfully prepared to obey him ; not that I had any hope of carrying such attempt beyond two pages of MS.—but it was a new thing. It struck me as something that I, who had never *authorised* a line, save in Orderly and Guard Reports (and letters for money, of course) should be considered competent to appear in a new, double-good magazine !! I actually laughed outright, to the consternation of my cat and dog, who wondered, I believe, what a plague ailed me. A reaction commenced, and I put so much gaiety and spirit into my *First Contribution*, that S[cott] was obliged to cut sheer away every alternate sentence (that at least was the agreeable turn he gave to the cursed excision). However, out *some* of it came ; I was amazed—that's weak—I was astonished—astounded—confounded. I said with John Woodvil : " It were a life of

CHARLES LAMB

gods to dwell in such an element" : to see, and hear, and *write* brave things :

These high and gusty relishes of life
Have no allayings of mortality.*

I read it, I don't know how oft—and I declare to you, I thought it the prettiest reading I had ever read! Why should I, anonymous, flinch? By my Halidom! I *think* so still!!"

The editor was so well pleased with Wainewright's first contribution that he encouraged him to continue writing for the magazine, until, "becoming aware that his friendly purpose had taken its full effect on my mind and body, he began to rap me on the head, as one sees a cat deal with an elderly kitten which retaineth its lacteal propensities over due season."

Afterwards, shortly before his painful end at a wretched inn on a squalid bed—Poor fellow! at this moment I feel, fresh as yesterday, round my neck the heart-breaking, feeble, kindly clasp of his fever-wasted arm—his faint whisper of entire trust in my friendship (though but short)—the voice dropping back again—the look—one stronger clasp! May the peace which rested over his last moments remain with

* John Woodvil, Act III. Sc. I.

SIDELIGHTS ON

him for ever ! That I steadfastly confide in such consummation, this reverence to his name will prove ; were it not for that I could not have uttered an allusion.

I must finish my involuntarily interrupted sentence. Afterwards there was some talk of a regular re-engagement, with an increase of five guineas per sheet ; on what account I could never exactly discover (not that I tried much, to be sure—it was too gracilely pleasant for the harsh touch of scrutiny). Elia, the whimsical, the pregnant, “ the abundant joke-giving ” Elia, and our Mr. Drama, the real, old, *original* Mr. Drama ! * *par nobile fratrum*, spoke flatteringly of Janus—shall I breathe it ?—as of one not absolutely inefficient, not the worst of Periodical scribblers.

Passing over the next two or three pages, which are amusing enough in their egotistical way, but which need not now detain us, we come to the main subject of the article—namely, the author’s impressions and characterisations of the writers in the *London Magazine*. He describes, in the spirit of a modern interviewer, the distinguishing characteristics

* William Hazlitt. Wainewright calls him the “ *original* Mr. Drama ” because he wrote the dramatic notices in the first two volumes only.

CHARLES LAMB

of the various contributors, and does it with very considerable skill and insight. The following passages, in which he gives us pen-sketches of John Clare and of Lamb, show him at his best as a writer and critic, and prove that, with all his faults (and they were numerous enough), he was something more than a mere coxcomb :

And first then for John Clare ; for *first* doth he stand in the sixth volume. "Princely Clare," as Elia would call thee, some three hours after the cloth was drawn. Alas ! good Clare, never again shalt thou and he engage in those high combats, those wit-fights ! Never shall his companionable draught cause thee an after-look of anxiety into the tankard !—no more shall he, pleasantly-malicious, make thy ears tingle and thy cheeks glow with the sound of that perplexing constraint, that conventional gagging-bill, that Grammar, till in the bitterness of thy heart thou cursedst Lindley Murray by all the stars ! Not once again shall thy sweetly-simple Doric phrase and accent beget the odious *pun*. Thou mayest imbibe thy ale in peace, and defy Priscian unchecked,—for Priscian's champion is gone !—Elia is gone ! Little didst thou think that evening would be the last, when thou and I, and two or three

SIDELIGHTS ON

more, Messer Brunetto,* Dugdale Redivivus, T——,† that anthery Cicero, parted with the humanity-loving Elia beneath the chaste beams of the watery moon, warmed with his hearty cheer—the fragrant steam of his *great plant*,—his savoury conversation, and the genuine good-nature of his cousin Bridget‡ gilding all. There was something solemn in the manner of our clasping palms,—it was first “hands round,” then “hands across.” That same party shall never meet again! But pardon, gracious Spirit! that I thus but parenthetically memorise thee: yet a few more lines shall flow to thy most embalmed remembrance. Rest then awhile.

One word at parting, John Clare! and if a strange one, as a stranger give it welcome! I have known jovial nights, felt deeply the virtues of the grape and the barleycorn; I have co-operated in “the sweet wicked catches”§ 'bout the chimes at twelve, yet I say to thee visit London seldom, shutting close thy ears in the abounding company of empty scoffers: ever holding it in thy inmost soul that love and perfect trust, not doubt, is the germ of *true* poetry. Thy hand, friend Clare! others may speak thee fairer, but none wish thee solider welfare than Janus.

* * * * *

* Rev. H. F. Cary.—Ed.

† Talfourd.—Ed.

‡ Mary Lamb.—Ed. § John Woodvil, Act III. Sc. I.

CHARLES LAMB

But Elia's ghost is impatient.

Yet what can I say of thee more than all know? that thou hadst the gaiety of a boy with the knowledge of a man; as gentle a heart as ever sent tears to the eyes. Marry! the black bile would sometimes slip over his tongue's tip; then would he spit it out, and look more sweetly for the riddance. How wittily would he mistake your meaning, and put in a conceit most seasonably out of season! His talk, without affectation, was compressed, like his beloved Elizabethans, even unto obscurity; like grains of fine gold, his sentences would beat out into whole sheets. I say "without affectation," for he was not the blind-brained man to censure in others his own vice. Truly "without affectation," for nothing rubbed him the wrong way so much as *pretence*; then the sparks flew about! Yet though he would strip and whip soundly such beggars in velvet rags, the thong never flew in the face of a wise moderation to do her any hurt.* He had small mercy on spurious fame; and a caustic observation on the *fashion for men of genius* (vulgarly so termed) was a standing dish. He contended that several of our minor talents, who now emulate Byron, Coleridge, and the old Dramatists, had, fifty years ago, rested contented

* Somewhere in Fuller.

SIDELIGHTS ON

satellites to old Sylvanus Urban—tranquil imitators of Johnson and Goldsmith. One of these flaunting, arrogant, ephemera was particularly odious to him * (in one species of his scribbling he resembleth a gilt chimney-sweeper, in another a blow-fly ;—this is my remark). Sometimes would he defame, “after a sort,” his printed (not painted) mistresses :

As perplexed lovers use
At a need, when in despair
To paint forth their fairest fair,
Or in part but to express
That exceeding comeliness
Which their fancies doth so strike,
They borrow language of dislike.

* * * *

. . . no other way they know
A contentment to express,
Borders so upon excess,
That they do not rightly wot
Whether it be pain or not.

“Farewell to Tobacco.”

Sir Thomas Browne was a “bosom cronie” of his—so was Burton, and old Fuller. In his amorous vein he dallied with that peerless Duchess of many-folio odour ;† and with the hey-day comedies of Beaumont and Fletcher he induced light dreams. He would deliver critical touches on these, like one inspired ; but

* Thomas Moore, I think.—Ed.

† The Duchess of Newcastle.—Ed.

CHARLES LAMB

it was good to let him choose his own game ; if another began, even on the acknowledged pets, he was liable to interrupt or rather append, in a mode difficult to define, whether as misapprehensive or mischievous. One night, at C——'s, the above dramatic partners were the temporary subject of chat. Mr. * * * commended the passion and haughty style of a tragedy (I don't know which of them), but was instantly taken up by Elia, who told him : "*That* was nothing—the lyrics were the high things—the lyrics !"—and so having stricken * * * with some amaze—he concluded with a brief intense eulogy on the "Little Thief !"

He had likewise two perversities—a dislike to all German literature, by which language he was, I *believe*, scrupulously intact : the other was a most vehement assertion of equality between Harrington and Fairfax as translators. Venial aberrations !—I know of no others.

His death was somewhat sudden ; yet he was not without wormy forebodings. Some of them he expressed, as you may recollect, Dear Proprietor ! at your hospitable table, the — of last ——. I accompanied him home at rather an early hour in the morning, and being benignantly invited to enter, I entered. His smoking materials were ready on the table. I cannot smoke, and therefore during the exhaustion of a pipe, I soothed my nerves with a single

SIDELIGHTS ON

tumbler of * * * and water. He recurred several times to his sensation of approaching death, not gloomily—but as of a retirement from business, a pleasant journey to a sunnier climate. The serene solemnity of his voice overcame me; the tears poured thick from their well-heads; I tried to rally myself and him: but my throat swelled and stopped my words.

His pipe had gone out; he held it to the flame of the candle, but in vain.

It was empty! His mind had been wandering. He smiled placidly, and knocked out the ashes. "Even so silently," said he, "may my fiery spark steal from its vehicle of ashes and clay!"

I felt oppressed. Many things had contributed lately to break and daunt my once elastic spirits. I rose to go: he shook me by the hand, neither of us spoke: with that I went my way—*and I saw him no more.*

How much is lost to this miserable world, which knew him not while it possessed him! I knew him—I, who am left to weep,—Eheu! Elia! Vale!

We have, fortunately, many delineations of Elia as he appeared to his friends and contemporaries; yet I am not sure that more than one or two of them surpass the

CHARLES LAMB

one just quoted in lively colouring and truth of drawing. It should be remembered that Wainewright was the first who attempted the task of sketching Elia from the life, so that whatever merit his work possesses is entirely his own. He seized upon all the essential traits in his subject ; so that he left little to be done by those who came after him but to fill in the details, and supply the minor lights and shadows. He did, in fact, all (or nearly all) that could be done at that time, when it was not yet possible to tell the whole truth about Lamb and his sister. What would we not give for such a picture of Spenser, Shakespeare, or even Milton? That Wainewright (strange as it seems) had a real and sincere admiration and even affection for his friend can hardly be doubted ; and it was this that enabled him, with such apparently careless and rapid strokes, to set him so vividly before the mind's-eye of the reader.

It is probable that the reader will have been puzzled by the allusions in the passages just quoted to the " wormy forebodings " and death of Elia. I do not think that any biographer or editor of Lamb has yet given

SIDELIGHTS ON

a complete account of the rather curious piece of mystification to which these allusions refer ; and I will therefore tell the story here.

Readers of Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's "Lamb and Hazlitt" will remember that he gives in that work an account of a certain hoax which was got up between Lamb, his friend Joseph Hume, and William Hazlitt, and which depended upon setting about a report of the death of the latter, in order that some amusement might be extracted from the resulting circumstances. The jest, it must be owned, was a rather thin one ; and it was not productive of any very amusing consequences. It seems, however, to have suggested to Lamb or Wainewright, or to both in concert, that a similar mystification might be attempted in the *London Magazine*, with Lamb himself this time as the deceased hero of the hoax. Accordingly in the number of the magazine for January 1823, the following paragraph appeared among the notices to correspondents which were given under the heading of "The Lion's Head" :

Elia is dead !—at least, so a *Friend* says ; but if he be dead, we have seen him in one of

CHARLES LAMB

those hours "when he is wont to walk"; and his *ghostship* has promised us very *material* assistance in our future Numbers. We were greatly tempted to put the Irish question to him of—"Why did you die?"—but as we know how very unusual a thing it is for a gentleman to give his reasons for such a step, we resisted the temptation. Mercy on us!—we hope we are wrong,—but we have our shadowy suspicious, that Elia, poor gentleman! has not been honestly dealt by. Mercutio was killed by one Will Shakespeare, a poacher, though his death was laid to other hands;—and Sir Roger de Coverley, (a gentleman more near our own time), perished under very mysterious circumstances. We could lay our finger upon the very man we suspect as being guilty of Elia's death! Elia's ghost, however, cannot sleep in its grave, for it has been constantly with us since his death, and vows it must still write for its peace of mind. Indeed, the first paper in our present Number is one of its *grave* consolations.

In the next paragraph to the above the jest was still further developed :

The winter must be *very hard*,—as it was expected to be,—for honest Master Janus Weathercock has, in the present Number,

SIDELIGHTS ON

“composed his decent head and breathed his last.” But we are acquainted with his tricks—and well know how subject he is to wilful trances and violent wakings. The newspapers told us the other day of a person who could counterfeit death to such a *nicety* as to deceive even an undertaker :—now our Readers must not be surprised to find Janus get up, after his laying-out, and go about his ordinary concerns. Depend upon it, Readers, he resembles the Spectator’s sleeper at the Cock and Bottle—and is no more dead than we are !

The sub-editor of the *London Magazine*, at the time these paragraphs appeared, was Thomas Hood, and he, doubtless, was the author of them. Of course it is evident from them that the announcements of Elia’s and of Janus’s decease were not intended to be taken seriously, and were in fact no more than playful mystifications. The jest, however, was kept up not only in the article by Wainewright, from which I have quoted, but also in Lamb’s contributions to the same number of the magazine, namely, “Rejoicings upon the New Year’s coming of Age,” and “A Character of the late Elia,” which

CHARLES LAMB

were signed "Elia's Ghost" and "Phil-Elia."*

In the next number of the magazine the following editorial notice appeared :

The Author of the Essays of Elia has promised "A Series of Critical and Miscellaneous Papers," the first of which will appear in our next Number, This intelligence will raise the spirit of Leila, who, since the death of Elia, has written a most feeling letter to his "Shade," from the shades below.

In the number for March 1823, we have Elia's own disavowal of his death. Perhaps some literal-minded persons had been misled by the announcement which had appeared in the January number, and it was thought necessary to undeceive them. But, after Lamb's usual fashion, the disclaimer itself was not free from an element of mystification :

Elia is not dead ! We thought as much—and even hinted our thought in the number for

* It can hardly be doubted, I think, that both these articles are by Lamb, though he affected, as we shall see later on, to disclaim them. Mr. W. C. Hazlitt, in his edition of Wainewright's "Essays and Criticisms," included "A Character of the late Elia," because he thought that in the latter part, it bore some resemblance to Janus's style. I cannot, however, find any such resemblance myself.

January. The following letter declaring Elia's existence is in his own handwriting, and was left by his own hand. We never saw a man so extremely alive, as he was, to the injury done him :

"Elia returns his thanks to the facetious Janus Weathercock, who, during his late unavoidable excursion to the Isles of Sark, Guernsey, and Jersey, took advantage of his absence to plot a sham account of his death ; and to impose upon the town a posthumous Essay, signed by his Ghost—which, how like it is to any of the undoubted Essays of the Author, may be seen by comparing it with his volume just published. One or two former papers, with his signature, which are not reprinted in the volume, he has reason to believe, were pleasant forgeries by the same ingenious hand."

That Lamb was merely jesting in attributing his "Rejoicings on the New Year's coming of age" and "one or two former papers" to Wainewright is sufficiently evident. The only signed essays by Lamb which appeared before January 1823, in the *London Magazine*, and which were not reprinted in the first series of Elia, were "Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading," and the reprinted "Con-

CHARLES LAMB

fessions of a Drunkard." Is it necessary to add that these could not possibly have been written by Wainewright?

With the last-quoted paragraph the mystification which I have recounted came to an end. Clearly it was only intended in the first instance as a sort of indirect advertisement for the first series of the Elia essays, which was then on the eve of publication.* Its interest for readers of the present day lies in its illustration of the odd and fantastic humour which formed so large a part in the character of Lamb : and in the proof which it affords of the intimacy which then existed between him and Wainewright.

There are other paragraphs in "The Lion's Head" which refer to Lamb ; but as these have been reprinted in some editions of his works I need not reproduce them here. The following note, however, which appeared in the number for November, 1823, is perhaps worth quoting :

* In a letter to John Taylor, dated Dec. 7, 1822, Lamb says: "There will be a sort of Preface [to the first series of Elia] in the next magazine, but not proper for the volume." The "sort of Preface" was, of course, "A Character of the late Elia."

SIDELIGHTS ON

Elia requests us to say that he is not the Lion some of his Correspondents take him for.

This means, no doubt, that some of the Correspondents of the magazine had addressed Lamb under the impression that he was the writer of the editorial notices which appeared under the heading of "The Lion's Head."

One of the most frequent, and certainly one of the cleverest, contributors to the *London Magazine* was John Hamilton Reynolds, whose father was the head writing-master at Christ's Hospital, and whose sister married Thomas Hood. He is known now only in a dim sort of way as the friend of Keats, and as the author of "The Garden of Florence," and of that queer piece of humour and self-pourtrayal, "The Fancy." He was, however, a remarkably gifted writer; and, had he possessed greater strength of character and steadiness of purpose, would now be reckoned as not the least of that brilliant band of authors by whom the early years of the nineteenth century were glorified. Even as it is it would be quite possible to select from his numerous writings a considerable volume of poems and essays such as would shew that

CHARLES LAMB

he is worthy of a better fate than the almost entire forgetfulness which is now his lot.

Though Reynolds must have been well known to Lamb, his name does not often occur in the letters or other writings of Elia. The only reference to him that I recollect at the moment is in a letter to Wordsworth, in which Lamb, without mentioning Reynolds' name, alludes with some show of indignation to the Parody of "Peter Bell," which the latter had published, just before the issue of the genuine work. This, however, was in 1819, and at that time, it appears, Lamb was not acquainted with the parodist. No doubt their work on the *London Magazine* brought them together; but apparently they were never on terms of much intimacy. Yet it seems plain that Reynolds had a good deal of admiration for Lamb; and, as his genius was somewhat imitative, he occasionally copied his manner.* All this I

* Thomas Hood, in his "Literary Reminiscences," gives a vivid picture of his brother-in-law's personal and intellectual peculiarities: "That smart active person opposite with a gamecock-looking head, and the hair combed smooth, fighter-fashion, over his forehead—with one finger hooked round a glass of champagne, not that he requires it to inspirit him, for

SIDELIGHTS ON

mention as introductory to a quotation or two from an article of Reynolds' which appeared in the *London Magazine* for February 1823. This article is called "The Literary Police Office, Bow Street," and consists of a burlesque report of proceedings against the leading authors of the time for various literary offences. It is very well and humorously done, with little or nothing in it which ought to have given offence to the writers thus put upon their trial. Among those who figure in the

his wit bubbles up of itself—is our Edward Herbert, the author of that true piece of biography, the 'Life of Peter Corcoran.' He is 'good with both hands,' like that Nonpareil Randall, at a comic verse or a serious stanza—smart at a repartee—sharp at a retort—and not averse to a bit of mischief. 'Twas he who gave the runaway ring at Wordsworth's Peter Bell. Generally, his jests, set off by a happy manner, are only ticklesome, but now and then they are sharp-flavoured,—like the sharpness of the pine-apple." When "Odes and Addresses to Great Men," by Hood and Reynolds (the latter being the author of the greater part of the volume), was first published, a copy fell into the hands of Coleridge, who came to the conclusion that it must be the work of Lamb, and wrote a letter congratulating him upon it. This was paying a great compliment to the real authors; though it seems rather surprising that such a mistake could be made by so good a critic as Coleridge.

CHARLES LAMB

article—or should I say in the dock?—are Wordsworth, Byron, Southey, Coleridge, Lamb, Moore, Rogers, and Scott. I quote the report of the cases of Wordsworth and Lamb, in order that the reader may have a sufficiently good idea of the author's humour :

William Wordsworth, a pedlar by trade, that hawks about shoe-laces and philosophy, was put to the bar, charged with stealing a pony, value 40s., from a Mrs. Foy, of Westmoreland ; but as no one was near him at the time, and as he was *beside himself*, the charge could not be brought home. Another charge, however, was made against him for converting to his own use a spade, with which Mr. Wilkinson had tilled his lands—but as Mr. Wilkinson was a gentleman of the Quaker persuasion, he would not appear to swear, and William also escaped on this charge. There were several readers of William's books who were ready to swear, but their oaths could not be taken. The prisoner had several duplicates of little childish poems and toys about him, which he said he had obtained from his grandmother. But it appearing that he had often imposed himself off as that old lady, he was remanded to allow of some inquiry. He conducted himself very

SIDELIGHTS ON

extravagantly while before the magistrates, so as to give an idea that he was not quite right. He called himself the first man—king of the poets—and wanted to read passages from his own works to prove it. The officers had much difficulty in restraining him from getting out of the dock to beat the magistrate's brains out with a log of the *Excursion*. Jeffrey, the officer, was obliged to *pinion* him.

Charles Lamb was brought up, charged with the barbarous murder of the late Mr. Elia. He was taken late in the evening, at a house of resort for characters of his description, in Fleet Street—and he had with him at the time of his capture a crape mask—a phosphorus (or hock) bottle—a dark lanthorn—a *skeleton* key—a centre-bit (out of the haunch)—and a large clasp-knife (and fork). The evidence was indisputable, and Mr. Lamb was committed. There appears to have been no motive for this horrible murder, unless the prisoner had an eye to poor Mr. Elia's situation in the *London Magazine*. The prisoner is a large gaunt-looking fellow, with a queer eye, and a broad overhanging brow. If no witness had come forward, his looks would *have appeared against him*.

II

HORACE SMITH'S IMITATION OF
LAMB

One of the most remarkable of the articles relating to Lamb which were published in the *London Magazine* appears in the third volume (p. 250), and is entitled "Death—Posthumous Memorials—Children." It was suggested by the appearance in the January number of the same volume of Lamb's "New Year's Eve." It forms an interesting pendant to that essay, which it supplements and completes by exhibiting the brighter side of that aspect of humanity which Lamb had painted in colours somewhat too sombre and depressing. It is plain that in writing it the author imitated the style of Elia as closely as he could ; and being perhaps the best (or one of the two best) of English parodists, his success was greater than that of any of the

SIDELIGHTS ON

other authors (including Hood, Patmore, and Procter), who attempted the same feat. When I first read the essay I was half inclined to think it must be by Lamb himself, notwithstanding the various eulogistic references to Elia which seemed to forbid that idea. On consideration, however, I found various points in it which led me to think that it was the work of an imitator ; and on further thought it seemed most probable that that imitator must be Horace Smith. So indeed it proved—for on referring to his “Gaieties and Gravities ” (3 vols., 1825) I found it there. As published in the book, however, the essay is considerably altered, and all the references to Elia and his “New Year’s Eve ” are omitted. As it is practically inaccessible to modern readers I do not think I need apologise for reproducing the essay here in its original and more interesting form.

DEATH—POSTHUMOUS MEMORIALS —CHILDREN

How I could expatiate upon the quaint lugubrious pleasantry, the social yet deep

CHARLES LAMB

philosophy of your friend Elia, as particularly illustrated in his delightful paper upon New Year's Eve!—but the bandying of praises among Correspondents has too *magazinish* a look :—I have learnt his essay by heart. Is it possible, said I to myself, when I first devoured it, that such a man can really feel such horrors at the thought of death, which he describes with so much humorous solemnity? But when I came to his conclusion, wherein he talks of the fears, “just now expressed, or *affected*,” I had presently a clue to his design.—Ha! I exclaimed, thou art the very Janus who hast always delighted in antithetical presentments; who lovest to exhibit thy tragic face in its most doleful gloom, that thou mayst incontinently turn upon us the sunshine of thy comic smile. Thou wouldst not paint the miseries endured by a friendless boy at Christ's, without a companion piece, pourtraying the enjoyments of a more fortunate youngster. Thou wouldst not pour forth the phials of thy wrath upon the plant tobacco, without the redemption of an eulogy upon its virtues, more eloquent than Sir Walter Raleigh's: nor hast thou now, as I trust, pronounced thy anathema

SIDELIGHTS ON

against the "foul ugly phantom," without being prepared, in the same happy strain, to chant a palinode. No, no. Death hath not any such grisly concomitants, considered either as a "thin, melancholy *privation*, or more confounding *positive*." He is the sleeping partner of life, and we give ourselves up to him every night, without any compunctious visitings :—we know not, when we enter them, that the sheets of our bed shall not prove our winding sheets, yet our hearts quake not. We walk arm in arm with him almost every hour, and when his gentle hand draws the curtain around us, and covers us up in our narrow bed, what is it but to fall asleep, and to have a little longer to wait for the daylight.—As I return to my sequestered quiet cottage, after the bustle of a day in London, and a glimpse at the pageantry of the theatre ; so after the great drama of life, shall we return to the tranquil non-existence from which we started :—we have had our turn, and must make room for others.—

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where ;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot !
This sensible warm motion to become

CHARLES LAMB

A kneaded clod, and the dilated spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick ribbed ice!—

Shakespeare, with his usual insight into human nature, has put the cowardly speech, of which this is the commencement, with all its monstrous notions of the Deity, and its abject and grovelling conclusion, into the mouth of Claudio, a dastard, who would purchase a pittance of life with his sister's dishonour—Well might she exclaim—

————— O you beast!
O faithless coward! O dishonest wretch!

Yet there is some force in the earnestness with which he urges the uncertain nature of death. “We know what we are, but we know not what we may be.”—And yet, after all, it is the love of what we are going *from*, more than the fear of what we are going *to*, that makes us draw back our foot when the grave opens beneath it. Three-fourths of mankind, in their last moments, seem more anxious to be recorded in this world than favoured in the next; and many masses ostensibly ordered for the repose of the soul, have really proceeded from a desire for perpetuating some remembrance of the body.

SIDELIGHTS ON

No one likes to drop into the earth, like a pebble into the ocean, and let the waves of eternity close over him, without some record or memorial. We wish to keep up some connection with mortality, however slight ; and we stretch back our shadowy arms from the tomb, to snatch at a phantom. Hence all our posthumous vanity, and monumental earth-clinging—from the dateless pyramids, down to the recent will of Mrs. Mary Hoggins of St. Olave, Southwark, who bequeaths to the parish ringers “a leg of mutton and trimmings, for ever, for ringing a peal of triple-bob-majors on the anniversary of her birth.” In commemorating its donor, the leg of mutton cannot fail more egregiously than the pyramids, which have entombed the names, as well as the bodies of their builders :—*they've been so long remembered they're forgot* ;—or, if Cheops and Cephrenes be indeed their founders, what have they perpetuated? An empty word, a sound, which we cannot incorporate in flesh and blood ; no, nor even in bones and dust, for Cambyzes and Belzoni were both forestalled. The monarch's sarcophagus was found empty, while the bones of the sacred bull were still

CHARLES LAMB

whole and recognisable. What a satire on human ambition !—Of *the Mausoleum*, one of the seven wonders of the world, not an atom remains :—we know nothing of him, who for so many centuries was its solitary tenant, while the name of the Queen who built it is familiar in our mouths, and will travel securely down to futurity from her having imparted it to a humble flower. What a triumph for nature !—I always keep some of these historical plants by me :—their hoar leaves tell a more affecting tale, than that inscribed by Apollo on the petals of the hyacinth.

Ingenuity has been exhausted in varying contrivances to defraud oblivion. Doggett has clothed his memory in a waterman's coat and badge ; while another actor serves up the embalmed mummy of his name in a twelfth cake, to be annually devoured in the green-room. But the substance is soon lost in the shadow, the symbol recalls no recollection of the original ; nothing remains but the name of a nonentity ; and what is this worth ?—Bucephalus perpetuated his name, as well as Alexander ; the incendiary of Diana's temple eternised his, though it was

SIDELIGHTS ON

forbidden to be uttered, while that of its first builder is lost. Vice, indeed, and folly have better chances of immortality, than virtue and wisdom ; for the former only are registered in our Courts and Calends ; and as blood and misery are the materials with which history builds, one destroyer of mankind shall outlast fifty benefactors. The Chinese have no annals, for they have had no wars. Poor-spirited wretch that I am ! no circumstances could have made me a hero, for, with shame I confess it, I would rather be a forgotten philosopher, than a remembered tyrant.

Poets have a much more substantial existence after death. The *non omnis moriar*, is not altogether a vain boast : their minds actually survive ; we are conversant with their thoughts, words, and actions ; we see a whole and consistent character, disembodied indeed, but still sufficiently vital to become companionable, and to participate in a species of communion between the living and the dead. But alas ! how quickly "comes the blind fury with the abhorred shears," and cuts off, for us moderns at least, even this precarious tenure. Only

CHARLES LAMB

four hundred and twenty years have elapsed since the death of Chaucer, and his dialect has become obsolete, even before his monument has quite decayed,—though that, too, is in a forlorn plight, and I would cheerfully subscribe towards its restoration, were it only for his having beaten a Franciscan Friar in Fleet Street. Gower, his contemporary, sleeps in St. Saviour's, Southwark, with his three great works under his head, where, and where only, their titles are still read: nor will that be practicable much longer; for, though his tomb was repaired only thirty years ago, it is again, from the dampness of its situation, hurrying to oblivion. The most popular of the moderns must soon become antiquated;—it is the *dead* languages only that live. But if the sons of Parnassus cannot secure life for themselves, they may help to banish the fear of death in us; and I agree with Elia, that those puling apprehensions may be “clean washed away by a wave of genuine Helicon,”—but not that this recipe is “your *only* Spa for these hypochondriacs.”

Elia declares himself to be a bachelor;—I mention it not in disparagement; for it

SIDELIGHTS ON

appears to have been his misfortune, rather than his fault. Had it been otherwise, he might, perhaps, have had children, and would have discovered that they alone can perform the seemingly inconsistent office of sweetening both life and death ; throwing a charm over existence, and making " the foul ugly phantom " approach, like the destroyer of Hipparchus, with triumphant garlands around his weapon. Children are the best living possession and posthumous existence ; and how delightful, as well as beneficial ! What a beautiful mystery is a child ! How awful in its incomprehensibility ;—how enchanting an essence of human nature, with all its virtues full blown, and its vices and imperfections undeveloped. They come to us fresh from the Creator's hand, and still retain the full savour of their Divine origin ; they are the offspring of heaven, and resemble their parent.—How intensely characteristic of the benignant Jesus was his exclamation, *Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven ;* and can we conceive a happier heaven than the mind of a child, into whose paradise regret for the past, and dread for the future, those demons

CHARLES LAMB

by which manhood is haunted, have not yet intruded ; where everything is an exquisite enjoyment of presentness ; and the rolling panorama of the world is beheld with all the keen relish that faculties, in their highest state of susceptibility for delightful impressions, can derive from the raciness of perpetual novelty. Christianity has adopted one cordial and endearing emblem, which gracefully succeeds to the winged Aurelia of the ancients ; I mean the cherubs' heads, engraved upon our tombs. I love to see them fluttering about, as if they were appointed to keep up the communication, and were ready to convey intelligence from one world to the other. As to the monumental skull, it is an offensive hieroglyphic of man ; and the sculptured bones are but an unseemly type of the cross. Away with them !

Ah ! Elia ! hadst thou possessed " offspring of thine own to dally with," thou wouldst never have made the melancholy avowal that thou hast "almost ceased to hope !" Thou wouldst have found rejuvenescence without Medea's cauldron, or Saint Leon's forbidden compact, or the pregnant

SIDELIGHTS ON

elixir of the alchemists. There is a blossoming of spring in the autumn of man's life, a genuine second childhood, not feeble and fatuous, but vigorous and buoyant, when all the green associations of youth break out upon us in full bloom from sympathy with our offspring. Then is it that we realise the delightful anticipation of the song,

And when with envy Time transported,
Shall think to rob us of our joys,
You'll in your Girls again be courted,
While I go wooing in my Boys.

Children afford an excuse for business, as well as a plea for pleasure. When old Chinnery, of Fenchurch Street, had realised a hundred thousand pounds, he was advised to retire from business, that he might enjoy himself—and be miserable. "I must take care of my *children*," was his reply ; so he continued to do the only thing for which he was fitted, and, after many more laborious and prosperous seasons, died covered with years and plums. At Vauxhall, last summer, I met my grave and substantial neighbour, Frampton, who, with an air of some confusion at being detected in an enjoyment,

CHARLES LAMB

assured me he had not been there before for many years, and only came then to give his children a treat. Mine, I am sure, give me a treat when they enable me to shake my sides at Grimaldi's jokes, and laugh the wrinkles out of my heart. Cares come with them, too, it must be admitted ; but it is better to have something to fear than nothing to hope. A father has no *tædium vitæ* ; and he loves his children the better, when he considers them as the depositaries and concentrations of past anxieties. They exhilarate his life, smooth his pillow of death, and give even a domestic attraction to the grave, wherein he joins those that have gone before him, and waits for those that are to follow. In fact, he hardly dies ; the living transcripts of his face and figure are still moving upon the earth ; his name survives, embodied in another self ; his blood is still flowing through human veins, and may continue its crimson current till the great wheel shall stand still. What posthumous memorial so vital as this ?

But children are often wayward and mischievous, and it is not less painful than necessary to correct them.—I cannot deny

it ; for unfortunately the proof is now before me ; and as Elia has given us a glimpse of a bachelor's study, with its huge folios, I will present to him a little scene from a parent's parlour.—There stands my daughter Rosalind in disgrace ! Relying upon the almost intuitive quickness of her mind, she has contented herself with casting one hasty glance upon her lesson, and, in school language, has been *turned back*, not without a smart reprimand for her idleness and precipitation. She listens in tingling silence ; and as she hangs down her head, her looks, falling forward, enable me to discover every articulation of the blue veins in her fair temple. A deep blush suffuses her face, while, with a mixed emotion of shame, and of a proud consciousness that she does not deserve the epithet *dunce*, which has been applied to her, she is pressing her lips together to prevent her crying.—But it is in vain ; beneath the long lashes of her down-cast eyes the tears are oozing out—they roll slowly over her crimsoned cheek, and fall upon the neglected book, one of whose leaves she is perseveringly twiddling with her finger and thumb.—In a farther corner of the room,

CHARLES LAMB

upon the stool of repentance, sits my noble, warm-hearted boy, Alfred, whose interdicted ball has for the second time broken me a large pane of glass ; for which I have not only vilipended him with angry looks and scolding voice, but have forbidden the intended visit to-morrow to his uncle. He is sobbing aloud ; and through the tears, which, refusing to be mopped up by the backs of both his hands, have made a wet patch in his pinafore, he steals at me now and then an inquiring glance ; but, on observing the severity of my countenance, instantly recalls his eyes. His is not the artifice of a cunning or cowardly child, exaggerating its distress to excite compassion ; nor the hateful anger of a revengeful one ; nor the passion of an irascible one ; but it is the boiling over of an affectionate heart, ready to break, because it is no longer in communion with mine, and because he cannot give vent to his love to-morrow, by pouting up his lips to kiss his cousins.

All this presents a painful picture to a father.—But is it nothing to anticipate the hour of reconciliation, when, with sparkling eyes, my children shall leap to my bosom ?

SIDELIGHTS ON

Is it nothing to know from experience that the tide of affection will gush more abundantly from this temporary interruption, and that I shall again be able to exclaim with old Dornton in the play—"who would *not* be a father?"—Is it nothing that——but I have described this happy moment till I can wait for its arrival no longer. God bless ye, my darlings ; come to my arms at once !—

While I have been wiping my children's eyes and my own, one of those involuntary thoughts which shoot across the brain like meteors, led me to ask what might be the future fate and fortune of those whom I was embracing. Affecting speculation !—Is it possible that these vivacious beings, bounding about in an intoxication of delight from the mere luxury of existence, can become old and querulous, and paralytic, and crawl along upon crutches?—Stale morality, to rake in the grave for dusty mementoes of our evanescency : to hold up a dead man's skull before our eyes, as if we drank our wine out of it, and wished to hob-a-nob,—or beat the devil's tattoo upon our memories with a skeleton's drumsticks ! If we wish to stamp this moral upon our hearts, let us compare

CHARLES LAMB

man with himself ; let us contemplate the death of the living ; of those who have survived themselves, and become their own tombs. Never did I feel so acutely the vanity of life, as when, in a palsied and superannuated old woman, I was told I beheld the celebrated beauty, upon whom Lord Chesterfield had written the well known song—

Fair Kitty, beautiful and young,
And wild as colts untamed—

But there is one pang, and an agonising one it is, from which bachelors are happily exempt. Heaven sometimes reclaims the most beautiful of our angels for itself. When our children have just fastened themselves to our hearts by a thousand ties, death, then, indeed, “a foul ugly phantom,” will stretch forth his bony hand to wrench them from us, and almost tear up our hearts by the roots in the struggle ! This excruciating disruption I have lately undergone, and I still shudder when I think of it. Farewell, my poor little —— !—I knew I could not pronounce her name ; but I find I cannot even write it ; and yet (such is the different construction of minds !) her mother, whose

SIDELIGHTS ON

distress was much more pungent than my own, found a solace in cherishing and nursing her memory, and could even bear to arrange her sorrows in verse. I enclose you the lines : it is needless to say, that they were never meant for publication, and affect no merit beyond the simple expression of the feelings they were intended to alleviate.

And now, Mr. Editor, I feel, that for all this nursery nonsense, some apology is due to your bachelor readers, always, however, excepting Elia, whose heart, whatever may be his real state, is assuredly cordial and parental. Assume an object, if you have it not. Let your Benedictine perusers, therefore, and all the Herods of the *London Magazine*, laud me for my moderation and brevity, when they learn that I have been merely writing to illustrate this position—— Paternity is as garrulous as old age. God help me ! I shall soon have *both* pleas to offer ; and yet, “I bate no jot of heart or hope.”—I have run three-fourths of my race without any diminution of happiness, and I will not anticipate it for the future ; nothing shall destroy my confidence in the benignant provisions of nature.—To yourself, Sir, I

CHARLES LAMB

offer no extenuation of my prolixity : your own heart will justify the overflowings of mine ; for you are, I believe, like myself,

A Father.*

I do not think I need draw the reader's attention to the various points in which the above essay resembles the manner and spirit of Lamb. There are, it is true, a few passages in which the writer fails to keep up his imitation of his model ; but on the whole he is singularly successful in echoing Lamb's thoughts, and in copying his manner. Like most of the writers who have been gifted with a genius for parody, Horace Smith when attempting originality was a very mediocre writer—though he now and then (as in his well-known verses entitled "Address to the Mummy at Belzoni's Exhibition") rose above his ordinary level. Few of his original essays can compare in excellence with "Death—Posthumous Memorials—Children."

* The essay is followed in the magazine by some verses headed "Lines on the Death of an Infant," but these are so indifferent in quality that it seems not worth while to reproduce them.

III

SOME NEWLY DISCOVERED CONTRIBUTIONS BY LAMB TO THE
"LONDON MAGAZINE"

When I first began to examine the volumes of the *London Magazine* in the hope of finding some hitherto overlooked matter of interest relating to Lamb it was with little expectation of making any remarkable discoveries. I naturally supposed that former investigators had gone carefully over the ground, and must have found whatever was worth finding that had any relation to Elia. It was therefore with no less surprise than pleasure that I found that this was by no means the case, and that very considerable gleanings had been left for me to gather. Former investigators seem to have contented themselves with looking for such articles as bore some obvious evidence of Lamb's

CHARLES LAMB

authorship: it does not seem to have occurred to any of them to search through the magazine for articles which might be proved to be his from internal evidence. The latter was the method upon which I proceeded; and I think the reader will presently own that it proved to be a much more fruitful one than might have been expected.

The search for articles by Lamb which bore no signature (or a misleading one) did not prove an altogether easy task. Of course, the first requisite for the work was a good acquaintance with his acknowledged works, and a feeling for his peculiar manner and mannerisms.*

Another difficulty in the way was the fact that Lamb had then (as he has now) a good many admirers who imitated his style as closely as they could. From this cause several articles, which I at first thought

* Lest the last sentence should seem somewhat too presumptuous let me say here that I make no claim to any special power of deciding by evidence of style what is or is not Lamb's. No doubt there are many good Elians (if I may be allowed to coin the expression) who would have made the same discoveries if they had started on the same path as myself.

might be his, had to be rejected on a further and closer examination. As a final result I found a fair number of pieces which I attribute confidently to his pen, and others which I believe are probably, but not certainly, his. These I shall now proceed to make known to the reader.

I have already stated that there is nothing in the first seven numbers of the *London Magazine* which can reasonably be attributed to Lamb. His contributions began with Number 8, in which the first of his Elia essays ("Recollections of the South Sea House") appeared. In the same number appeared the first of the articles which, on internal evidence, I attribute to him. This is a review of the poems of Bernard Barton. I think there can be very little doubt as to Lamb's authorship of this. The writer of the article says of Barton and his poems, just what, with our knowledge of Lamb's esteem and friendship for the Quaker poet, we should expect him to say. All that is said in praise of the Quakers, and especially of female Quakers, is, as we know, in accordance with what he has said elsewhere about them. Let the reader compare what is said about a

CHARLES LAMB

Quaker beauty in the review with the following passage from "A Quaker's Meeting" :

Every Quakeress is a lily; and when they come up in bands to their Whitsun-conferences, whitening the easterly streets of the metropolis, from all parts of the United Kingdom, they show like troops of the Shining Ones.

May we not reasonably believe that this passage, and that in the review, came from the same hand ; and that both were inspired by the remembrance of his affection for the beautiful Quakeress, Hester Savory ? I cannot help thinking so myself, whatever conclusion others may come to.

[REVIEW OF BARTON'S POEMS]

We have felt a good deal interested in this volume, in consequence of hearing that its author is one of the Society of Friends ; but certainly it cannot be said of him, that he sees creation clothed in a drab-coloured suit. He writes stanzas to ladies, verses to valleys, and a lyrical address to the Gallic eagle ;—and all this he does in as quick, free, and lively a spirit, as any worldling poet that can be

named. The only peculiarity we can discover about the pieces, indicative of their writer's sect, is their extreme benevolence, and spotless innocence. In these respects, indeed, his muse may be said to possess a lovely Quaker countenance,—such as we have sometimes had the good fortune to see in stage coaches, and have invariably fallen in love with, whenever we have seen it. The eye sparkling, but quiet in self-possession and modesty; the delicate complexion reflecting health of body and mind; the regular features, ever undisturbed by wayward or lawless feelings:—such is a Quaker beauty; graceful in reserve,—holy as a nun, yet performing, or ready to perform, her proper part in society;—a Venus in a poke-bonnet, whose presence causes strangers to feel the authority and power of virtue, and to discipline their discourse, so as to pay homage to purity! We really wish that Mr. Barton, who has so much better opportunities than we can boast of, to contemplate the bewitching originals of this description, would send us a poetical portrait of some young and lovely friend, in whom the characteristic features of the sect are intimately

CHARLES LAMB

united with the captivations of the charming woman. We should be proud to see it adorning the pages of the *London Magazine*, with its fine Madonna, Bethlem aspect. We had rather have it in our cabinet collection than any of Mrs. Mier's gallery—except Lady Jersey, whose beauty, if she were but a Quaker, would be altogether fatal. We have reason, therefore, to thank heaven that she is contented to be the queen of Almack's.

The volume before us, generally speaking, is filled with the amiable effusions of a kind and gifted mind, whose internal harmony is in beautiful unison with the melody of external nature, and of virtue. More brilliant compositions, more finished and powerful poetry, we have often met with; but we have never met with any that afforded more unequivocal indication of genuine feeling, of deep affection, of benevolence, sympathy, taste, and integrity. The writer seems to have an ear ever on the listen for the accents of charity, patriotism, and religion,—that he may catch their burthen, and prolong their sound: wherever human anguish causes the tear to start, there would he fain be to

SIDELIGHTS ON

soothe or alleviate : whatever has really deserved well of fame, he is proud to celebrate : and the choicest and coyest charms of nature have smitten his heart with indelible impressions.

For these reasons the contents of his book form a catalogue of the best, the most beautiful, and the most touching subjects : all that is most calculated to improve and delight the mind, is there to be found,—in short, we cannot conceive a more lively reflection of a worthy character than this collection of poems.

That the expression is always on a par with the feeling we cannot say : the writer's style, as it strikes us, is very unequal ; and, in the simplicity of conscious sincerity, we sometimes find him commonplace in phrase, and careless in construction. It is very easily to be seen that Mr. Barton is not a professional writer :—we find very ordinary lines often following very good ones, in his compositions, in a way that declares him disdainful of the labour necessary to avoid this, and to give his powers fair play. Near his most lively images are placed some of the dullest ; and common prosing is too

CHARLES LAMB

frequently hard on the heels of passages of genuine poetry.—We should, on the whole, then, set him down as an amateur of distinguished talent, ready to celebrate any worthy subject that offers itself; one that ought to be, and no doubt is, highly prized in the circles, and amongst the acquaintance, where, and to whom, he acts as laureate.

The first quotation we shall make from Mr. Barton's volume will be a piece to which we are led by hearty coincidence of sentiment with the author. It is addressed to Wordsworth "on the publication of his poem, entitled Peter Bell."

Beautiful poet! as thou art,
In spite of all that critics tell,
I thank thee, even from my heart,
For this, thy tale of "Peter Bell,"
It is a story worthy one
Who thinks, feels, loves, as thou hast done.

It is a story worthy too
Of a more simple, primal age,
When feelings, natural, tender, true,
Hallow'd the poet's humblest page :
Ere trick'ry had usurp'd the place
Of unsophisticated grace.

I quarrel not with those who deem
Essential to poetic mood,
High-sounding phrase, and lofty theme,
And "ready arts to freeze the blood";

SIDELIGHTS ON

Intent to dazzle, or appal ;
But nature still is best of all.

Continue still to cultivate,
In thy sequester'd solitude,
Those high conceptions which await
The musings of the wise and good ;
Conceptions lofty, pure, and bright,
Which fill thy soul with heavenly light.

Betake thee to thy groves and fields,
Thy rocky vales, and mountains bare,
And give us all that nature yields
Of manners, feelings, habits there :
Please and instruct the present age,
And live in history's latest page.

The poem entitled " Recollections " opens,
we think, very beautifully :

All round was still and calm ; the noon of night
Was fast approaching : up the unclouded sky
The glorious moon pursued her path of light,
And shed her silvery splendour far and nigh :
No sound, save of the night-wind's gentlest sigh,
Could reach the ear ; and that so softly blew,
It scarcely stirr'd, in sweeping lightly by,
The acacia's airy foliage ; faintly too
It kiss'd the jasmine's stars which just below me grew.

Before me, scatter'd here and there, were trees
Whose massy outline of reposing shade,
Unbroken by that faint and fitful breeze,
With the clear sky a lovely contrast made :
'Twas nature, in her chastest charms array'd !
How could I then abruptly leave such scene ?

CHARLES LAMB

I could not ; for the beauties it display'd
To me were dearer than the dazzling sheen
Of noon's effulgent hour, or morning's sparkling mien.

Awhile in silent reverie I stood,
Pensively gazing on the objects round ;
And soon my mind, in contemplative mood,
Abundant theme for meditation found ;
And far beyond the shadowy visible bound
Of my eye's glance did eager fancy fly ;
Nor even Virtue on her flight then frown'd,
But mark'd her progress with approving eye,
For heav'n-ward was her course, her visions pure and
high.

They err, who calculate time's silent pace
By the mere lapse of minutes, or of hours ;
Not even thought his printless step can trace,
Which hastens onward, over thorns and flowers,
Nor cares for sun that shines, or storm that low'rs.
'Twere wiser far in us to count its flight
By the improvement of our mental powers,
And by the store of suffering, or delight,
Which cheers Life's fleeting day, or clouds Death's
coming night.

What we have said of the amiable turn of
the author's character, will be fully borne
out to the reader's mind by such pieces as
the following,—and there are several of the
same character in the collection.

THE MOTHER'S LAMENT.

Pale and cold is the cheek that my kisses oft press'd,
And quench'd is the beam of that bright sparkling
eye ;

SIDELIGHTS ON

For the soul, which its innocent glances confess'd,
Has flown to its God and its Father on high.

No more shall the accents, whose tones were more
dear

Than the sweetest of sounds even music can make,
In notes full of tenderness fall on my ear;

If I catch them in dreams, all is still when I wake!

No more the gay smiles that those features display'd,
Shall transiently light up their own mirth in mine;
Yet, though these, and much more, be now cover'd in
shade,

I must not, I cannot, and dare not repine.

However enchantingly flattering and fair,
Were the hopes, that for thee, I had ventur'd to
build,

Can a frail, finite mortal presume to declare
That the future those hopes would have ever ful-
fill'd?

In the world thou hast left, there is much to allure
The most innocent spirit from virtue and peace:
Hadst thou liv'd, would thy own have been equally
pure,

And guileless, and happy, in age's increase?

Temptation, or sooner or later, had found thee;
Perhaps had seduc'd thee from pathways of light;
Till the dark clouds of vice, gath'ring gloomily round
thee,

Had enwrap thee for ever in horror and night.

But *now*, in the loveliest bloom of the soul,
While thy heart yet was pangless, and true, and
unstain'd;

Ere the world one vain wish by its witcheries stole,
What it could not confer, thou for ever hast gain'd!

CHARLES LAMB

Like a dew-drop, kiss'd off by the sun's morning beam,
A brief, but a beauteous existence was given ;
Thy soul seem'd to come down to earth, in a dream,
And only to wake, when ascended to heaven !

There is something infinitely touching and fanciful in the following three verses, taken from several addressed to " Sleep " :

With angel eye, and a brow that never
Had been other than meekly calm ;
And lips which a soft smile seems to sever,
Such as shed round a soothing charm ;
With a step more light than Zephyr's sigh,
Would I paint thee, in loveliness passing by.

Such could I fancy thee, roving far
Beneath the pale moon's glistening beam ;
Or the fainter light of heaven's fairest star,
Attended by many a shadowy dream :
These purer visions, in mercy given
To slumbering souls, when they dream of heaven !

By an infant's couch I behold thee sit,
Its widow'd parent's earthly treasure ;
And over its features, like sunshine, flit
Bright gleams of half unconscious pleasure :
Smiles of a spirit that knows no fears.
Such as belong not to after years.

In the piece addressed to a father, on the death of his only child, we find the following striking verse :

SIDELIGHTS ON

I grant that the stroke which has laid thy hopes low,
Is perhaps the severest that nature can know;
If hope but *deferr'd*, may cause sickness of heart,
How dreadful to see it for ever *depart*!

In conclusion we shall quote one entire
piece, doing equal credit to the head and
heart of the estimable writer.

STANZAS

Addressed to Percy Bysshe Shelley

Forests, and lakes, the majesty of mountains,
The dazzling glaciers, and the musical sound
Of waves and winds, or softer gush of fountains:
In sights and sounds like these thy soul has found
Sublime delight; but can the visible bound
Of this small globe be the sole nurse and mother
Of knowledge and of feeling? Look around!
Mark how one being differs from another;
Yet the world's book is spread before each human
brother.

Was this world, then, the parent and the nurse
Of him whose mental eye outliv'd the sight
Of all its beauties?—Him who sang the curse
Of that forbidden fruit, which did invite
Our first progenitors, whom that foul sprite,
In serpent-form, seduc'd from innocence,
By specious promises, that wrong and right,
Evil and good, when they had gather'd thence,
Should be distinctly seen, as by diviner sense?
They pluck'd, and paid the awful penalty
Of disobedience: yet man will not learn
To be content with knowledge that is free
To all. There are, whose soaring spirits spurn

CHARLES LAMB

At humble lore, and, still insatiate, turn
From living fountains to forbidden springs;
Whence having proudly quaff'd, their bosoms burn
With visions of unutterable things,
Which restless fancy's spell in shadowy glory brings.
Delicious the delirious bliss, while new;
Unreal phantoms of wise, good, and fair,
Hover around, in every vivid hue
Of glowing beauty; these dissolve in air,
And leave the barren spirit bleak and bare
As alpine summits: it remains to try
The hopeless task (of which themselves despair)
Of bringing back those feelings, now gone by,
By making their own dreams the code of all society.
"All fear, none aid them, and few comprehend";
And then comes disappointment, and the blight
Of hopes, that might have bless'd mankind, but end
In stoic apathy, or starless night:
And thus hath many a spirit, pure and bright,
Lost that effulgent and ethereal ray,
Which, had religion nourish'd it, still might
Have shone on, peerless, to that perfect day,
When death's veil shall be rent, and darkness dash'd
away.
Ere it shall prove too late, thy steps retrace:
The heights thy muse has scal'd, can never be
Her loveliest, or her safest dwelling-place.
In the deep valley of humility,
The river of immortal life flows free
For thee—for all. Oh! taste its limpid wave,
As it rolls murmuring by, and thou shalt see
Nothing in death the Christian dares not brave,
Whom faith in God has given a world beyond the
grave!

SIDE LIGHTS ON

In the December number of the magazine there appeared a letter headed "The Quakers," which purported to be written by a member of the Society of Friends. It is a letter of thanks for the review of Barton's Poems, and for the reviewer's good opinion of the Quaker community. The writer ends by quoting a passage from a poem by Luke Booker, entitled "The Hop Garden." I quote a part of this because it coincides so closely with some of Lamb's expressions regarding the Quakers that it seems likely he was acquainted with it :

One mode of dress contents them ; and but few
The colours of their choice,—the gaudy shunn'd
E'en by the gentle Sisterhood. In youth,
The rose's vivid hue their cheeks alone,
Wear, dimpling,—shaded by a bonnet plain,
White as the cygnet's bosom,—jetty black
As raven's wing,—or if a tint it bear,
'Tis what the harmless dove herself assumes.
—The hardier sex—an unloop'd hat, broad-
brimm'd,
Shelters from summer's heat and winter's cold:
That, from its station high ne'er deigns to
stoop—
Obsequious, nor to custom nor to king.

CHARLES LAMB

Yet tho' precise and primitive in speech—
Restrain they not the smile,—the seemly jest—
Nor e'en the cordial laugh, which cynics grave
Falsely assert "bespeaks the vacant mind."

It is in the third volume of the *London Magazine* that I have found what are perhaps the most interesting of the hitherto unknown writings of Lamb. The first of them is a set of verses, which are, I think, almost certainly from his pen. They may not seem so on a first perusal ; but I think that on a little reflection the reader will be pretty sure to agree with my opinion. The verses are as follows :

VERSES

To Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and
Brown, on their publication of
Wordsworth's "Excursion"
in Octavo.

Aye ! this, as Cobbet says, is right !—
Just as it should be !—With delight,
For one, I give my bravo !
And thank you for enabling me
Upon my humble shelf, to see
"The Excursion"—in Octavo !

SIDELIGHTS ON

Long have I grieved that such a mine
Of Poesy's true lore divine,
 Rich veins of thought affording ;
Should be half inaccessible,
By means of that forbidding spell
 Which lurks in quarto boarding.

'Tis not the cumbrous shape alone,
Though that, I candidly must own,
 A *tangible* objection :
For books which one is only able
To read—by spreading on a table,
 Seldom invite inspection.

Yet bulk I should not heed one pin,
In books that are worth looking in—
 There is a much worse evil :
Twelve shillings, for a book like this,
E'en for poor bards, is not amiss,—
 Two guineas is—the d—l !

And never more^e so, than when set
Upon a tome one wants to get ;
 Then—then indeed we feel it :—
Un pauvre diable, tel que moi,
Is tempted to infringe the law,
 And, from pure taste, to steal it !

But, such a speculation might
Be awkward ; so it is but right

CHARLES LAMB

To end such lawless thrillings,—
By publishing to all the town,
That Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown,
Now sell it for twelve shillings.

That these verses were written by Lamb as a friendly advertisement of Wordsworth's poem is, I think, fairly certain. It was such an act as his friendship and admiration for Wordsworth would naturally suggest to him : and it is altogether in unison with the sentiments which he expresses in other places. Thus, in the first letter which has been preserved of his correspondence with Coleridge, he says : " When Southey becomes as modest as his predecessor, Milton, and publishes his Epics in duodecimo, I will read 'em ; a guinea a book is somewhat exorbitant, nor have I the opportunity of borrowing the work." Here is plainly the germ of the verses on the " Excursion " ; and it is, I think, almost enough of itself to justify their attribution to Lamb. The verses, I may add, follow immediately on the Elia essay, " Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist." On the whole I think that though we are not entitled to ascribe the lines positively to Lamb, the

SIDELIGHTS ON

balance of probabilities is at least in favour of his authorship of them.

The next piece I shall print is the most interesting and curious of all my discoveries. That it is Lamb's, cannot, I think, be doubted—that is by any one competent to judge. It bears his sign-manual on every sentence, almost, one might say, on every word. But let the reader judge for himself :

THE CONFESSIONS OF H. F. V. H. DELAMORE, ESQ.

Sackville Street, March 25, 1821.

Mr. Editor,—A correspondent in your last Number,* blesses his stars, that he was never yet in the pillory ; and, with a confidence which the uncertainty of mortal accidents but weakly justifies, goes on to predict that he never shall be. Twelve years ago, had a Sibyl prophesied to me, that I should live to be set in a worse place, I should have struck her for a lying beldam. There are degradations below that which he speaks of.

I come of a good stock, Mr. Editor. The Delamores are a race singularly tenacious of

* Elia :—Chapter on Ears.

CHARLES LAMB

their honour ; men who, in the language of Edmund Burke, feel a stain like a wound. My grand uncle died of a fit of the sullens for the disgrace of a public whipping at Westminster. He had not then attained his fourteenth year. Would I had died young !

For more than five centuries, the current of our blood hath flowed unimpeachably. And must it stagnate now ?

Can a family be tainted backwards ?—can posterity purchase disgrace for their progenitors ?—or doth it derogate from the great Walter of our name, who received the sword of knighthood in Cressy field, that one of his descendants once sate ** *** ***** ?

Can an honour, fairly achieved in *quinto Edwardi Tertii*, be reversed by a slip in *quingagesimo Georgii Tertii* ?—how stands the law ?—what *dictum* doth the college deliver ?—O Clarencieux ! O Norroy !

Can a reputation, gained by hard watchings on the cold ground, in a suit of mail, be impeached by hard watchings on the cold ground in other circumstances—was the endurance equal ?—why is the guerdon so disproportionate ?

SIDELIGHTS ON

A priest mediated the ransom of the too valorous Reginald, of our house, captived in Lord Talbot's battles. It was a clergyman, who by his intercession abridged the period of my durance.

Have you touched at my wrongs yet, Mr. Editor?—or must I be explicit as to my grievance?

Hush, my heedless tongue.

Something bids me—"Delamore, be ingenuous."

Once then, and only once——

Star of my nativity, hide beneath a cloud, while I reveal it !

Ancestors of Delamore, lie low in your wormy beds, that no posthumous hearing catch a sound !

Let no eye look over thee, while thou shalt peruse it, reader !

Once——

these legs, with Kent in the play, though for far less ennobling considerations, did wear "cruel garters."

Yet I protest it was but for a thing of nought—a fault of youth, and warmer blood—a calendary inadvertence I may call it—or rather a temporary obliviousness of the

CHARLES LAMB

day of the week—timing my Saturnalia amiss.

Streets of Barnet, infamous for civil broils,
ye saw my shame !—did not your Red Rose
rise again to dye my burning cheek ?

It was but for a pair of minutes, or so—
yet I feel, I feel, that the gentry of the
Delamores is extinguished for ever.—

Try to forget it, reader.—

(Signed)

Henry Francis Vere Harrington Delamore.

I do not think I need spend much pains in demonstrating that this “ Confession ” is from the pen of Lamb. I had only to become acquainted with it, to be convinced as to its authorship. Whether it will approve itself as Lamb’s as readily to others as it did to me I do not know ; but fortunately there is evidence, apart from that of style, which is sufficient, I think, to produce conviction in the most sceptical. The “ Confessions ” appeared in the number for April 1821 ; in the next number of the magazine, the following notice appeared in “ The Lion’s Head ” :

Spes may be assured that the fact related in

SIDELIGHTS ON

the paper in our last Number, signed "Delamore," and dated "Sackville Street," is genuine, with the exception of the name and date. It is the writer's own story.

—quæque ipse miserrima vidi,
Et quorum pars magni fui.

* * * *

The four stars with which this notice is signed, and which may stand either for "Elia" or "Lamb," are used elsewhere in the magazine as the signature to two of Lamb's undoubted Poems (the Sonnet to Barry Cornwall, and "The Ape"). But, the reader may object, the writer of the notice states that Delamore's "Confession" is his own story; and this means, if Lamb really was the author, that he was once put in the stocks! This does not necessarily follow—for, knowing Lamb's tendency to mystification, we need only suppose it to be one of his sportive hoaxes. In this case, however, Lamb was quite serious. It is no fiction, but a sober fact that he was once put in the stocks! I hope I shall not shock his admirers too greatly by this disclosure. Some of them may be inclined to think that it is a fact that should have been concealed.

CHARLES LAMB

I am not of this opinion, or I certainly should not now disclose it. Nor was Lamb himself, it would appear, very desirous of concealing it : or he would not thus have made material for "copy" of it. He must have known that some of his fellow contributors on the magazine, if not some of its readers, would become acquainted with the story of his escapade, owing to the publication of the Delamore "Confessions." Nothing could well be more characteristic of him than thus to make a jest of what would have been a very sore point to most people. I do not hesitate to say that if any of Lamb's admirers are disposed to think the worse of him on account of this incident they are not worthy to be enrolled in the ranks of true Elians.

When I first read the notice to *Spes* respecting the Delamore "Confession," I was, of course, somewhat puzzled by the assertion that it was a part of the writer's own experience. But when I made my discovery known to my friend, Mr. E. V. Lucas, he at once informed me that there *is* evidence in existence which proves that Lamb really was, on one occasion, put in the stocks. This evidence, so kindly communicated to

SIDELIGHTS ON

me, Mr. Lucas will doubtless make known in his forthcoming *Life of Lamb*. Suffice it now to say that Lamb's own account of the matter is, no doubt, substantially true. His offence was "but a thing of nought—a fault of youth and warmer blood—a calendary inadvertence;"* and his punishment—which lasted but for a pair of minutes or so—was probably as much a jest on the part of those who ordered it as was the untimely merri-ment by which it was provoked.

Perhaps it is worth while to remark that Lamb's "Reflections in the Pillory" was, in all probability, suggested by the Delamore "Confessions." The humour of the "Reflections," though superior, is certainly of the same kind as that of the "Confessions"; and we have thus reason to be grateful to the Bumbles to whom we are indirectly indebted for two such characteristic examples of Elian humour.

I have not found in the fourth volume of the *London Magazine* any unknown articles which can be safely attributed to Lamb. But in the fifth volume, I have found, on page 53, the following "Dramatic Fragment,"

* The incident took place on a Sunday.

CHARLES LAMB

which will be new to most, though not to all,
lovers of Elia.

DRAMATIC FRAGMENT

Fie upon't

*All men are false, I think. The date of love
Is out, expired, its stories all grown stale,
O'er-past, forgotten like an antique tale
Of Hero and Leander.*

John Woodvil.

All are not false. I knew a youth who died
For grief, because his Love proved so,
And married with another.
I saw him on the wedding day,
For he was present in the church that day
In festive bravery deck'd,
As one that came to grace the ceremony.
I mark'd him when the ring was given,
His countenance never chang'd ;
And when the priest pronounced the marriage
blessing,
He put a silent prayer up for the bride,
For so his moving lips interpreted.
He came invited to the marriage feast
With the bride's friends,
And was the merriest of them all that day :
But they who knew him best call'd it feign'd
mirth :

SIDELIGHTS ON

And others said
He wore a smile like death upon his face.
His presence dash'd all the beholders' mirth,
And he went away in tears.
What followed then ?
Oh ! then
He did not, as neglected suitors use,
Affect a life of solitude in shades,
But lived,
In free discourse and sweet society,
Among his friends who knew his gentle nature
best.
Yet ever when he smiled,
There was a mystery legible in his face,
That whoso saw him said he was a man
Not long for this world.—
And true it was, for even then,
The silent love was feeding at his heart
Of which he died :
Nor ever spake word of reproach,
Only he wish'd in death that his remains
Might find a poor grave in some spot, not far,
From his mistress' family vault, "being the place
Where one day Anna should herself be laid."

* * *

This "Dramatic Fragment" originally formed part of Lamb's "John Woodvil ;" but when that play was published, it was,

CHARLES LAMB

together with some other passages, omitted. These omitted passages, however, were published from the original manuscript, by the late Mr. Dykes Campbell in the *Athenæum*. The fragment has also been printed by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt in his "Charles and Mary Lamb." Nevertheless, I think the reader will be pleased to see the lines reprinted here in the form and manner in which their author originally published them.

In the sixth volume of the magazine a new feature was started, under the heading of "The Miscellany." This was introduced as follows :

We propose to establish a place of refuge for small ingenious productions. A short poem, an original thought, a good jest, an interesting fact, a new discovery (in science or art), anecdotes (whether in philosophy, biography, natural history, or otherwise), shall all be welcome. We only stipulate that they shall be good. In a word, we mean to provide for the younger children of the Wits and the Muses, and others, who have been immemorably disabled from sheltering their own offspring. The character of our Miscellany will

SIDELIGHTS ON

be *brevity*,—which is the soul of wit, as every body knows. . . .

The series began with a note about Friar Bacon, and a poem, neither of which need now detain us. These are followed by some “Scraps of Criticism,” the authorship of which, in my opinion, is sufficiently evident. Were it not so, the Editor’s reference to “the fine Roman hand” of his contributor, would, I think, be sufficient to identify him. The “Scraps” are thus introduced :

Our next contributor calls his paper “Scraps of Criticism.” We think that we know “the fine Roman hand,”—but let that pass. It is enough, perhaps, (for our readers) that the remarks are good. Whether we translate them from the Syriac or Chaldee, or transcribe them from vellum or papyrus, is a question which we cannot now explain. The two first “Scraps” refer to Gray’s Poems, and take novel (and, what is better, just) exceptions to two passages which they contain.—Johnson has been abused more, perhaps, for undervaluing the merits of Gray, than for any of his offences against

CHARLES LAMB

literature. For our own parts, we think that he has been abused unjustly. Were *we* to cast a stone at him, it would be for his life of Milton. But Gray has, of all poets in the English language, the least right to complain. His reputation is enormously too great for the foundation upon which it rests. No doubt that he had learning, and a pleasant way of communicating his thoughts. But his language is, beyond even that of his contemporaries, artificial ; and his poems are not remarkable either for original thought or even felicity of expression. His "Elegy" is clearly the first of his compositions : there is a tender vein of melancholy running through it ; and the reflections, generally speaking, if not very profound, are graceful and pleasing.—The "Scrap" upon the word "*villain*" is a very material one ; inasmuch as it seems to be the *key*, or leading word, to the character of Richard, as it is seen on the stage. With regard to "Howell's Letters,"—certainly our friend Howell has taken an odd *pro* and *con* view of the same subject. Perhaps he had one eye for the good, and one for the bad—and saw with them alternately. Thus "to wink at a person's faults" is to shut the bad eye.

SIDELIGHTS ON SCRAPS OF CRITICISM.

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;
Hands that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

Gray's Elegy.

There has always appeared to me a vicious mixture of the figurative with the real in this admired passage. The first two lines may barely pass, as not bad. But the *hands* laid in the earth, must mean the identical five-finger'd organs of the body ; and how does this consist with their occupation of *swaying rods*, unless their owner had been a school-master ; or *waking lyres*, unless he were literally a harper by profession ? Hands that "might have held the plough," would have some sense, for that work is strictly manual ; the others only emblematically or pictorially so. Kings nowadays sway no rods, *alias* sceptres, except on their coronation day ; and poets necessarily strum upon the harp or fiddle, as poets. When we think upon dead cold fingers, we may remember the honest squeeze of friendship which they returned heretofore ; we cannot but with violence connect their living idea, as opposed

CHARLES LAMB

to death, with uses to which they must become metaphorical (*i.e.*, less real than dead things themselves) before we can so with any propriety apply them.

He saw, but, blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.

Gray's Bard.

Nothing was ever more violently distorted, than this material fact of Milton's blindness having been occasioned by his intemperate studies, and late hours, during his prosecution of the defence against Salmasius—applied to the dazzling effects of too much mental vision. His corporal sight was blasted with corporal occupation ; his inward sight was not impaired, but rather strengthened, by his task. If his course of studies had turned his brain, there would have been some fitness in the expression.

And since I cannot, I will prove a *villain*,
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

Soliloquy in Richard III.

The performers, whom I have seen in this part, seem to mistake the import of the word which I have marked with italics. Richard

SIDELIGHTS ON

does not mean, that because he is by shape and temper unfitted for a *courtier*, he is therefore determined to prove, in our sense of the word, a *wicked man*. The word in Shakespeare's time had not passed entirely into the modern sense ; it was in its passage certainly, and indifferently used as such ; the beauty of a world of words in that age was in their being less definite than they are now, fixed, and petrified. *Villain* is here undoubtedly used for a *churl*, or *clown*, opposed to a *courtier* ; and the incipient deterioration of the meaning gave the use of it in this place great spirit and beauty. A *wicked man* does not necessarily hate *courtly pleasures* ; a *clown* is naturally opposed to them. The mistake of this meaning has, I think, led the players into that hard literal conception with which they deliver this passage, quite foreign, in my understanding, to the bold gay-faced irony of the soliloquy. Richard, upon the stage, looks round, as if he were literally apprehensive of some dog snapping at him ; and announces his determination of procuring a looking-glass, and employing a tailor, as if he were prepared to put both in practice before he should

CHARLES LAMB

get home—I apprehend “ a world of figures here.”

Howell's Letters. “ The treaty of the match 'twixt our Prince [afterwards Charles I.] and the Lady Infanta, is now strongly a foot : she is a very comely lady, *rather of a Flemish complexion than Spanish, fair haired, and carrieth a most pure mixture of red and white in her face. She is full and big-lipp'd; which is held a beauty rather than a blemish, or rather excess in the Austrian family, it being a thing incident to most of that race ; she goes now upon 16, and is of a tallness agreeable to those years.*” This letter bears date, Jan. 5, 1622. Turn we now to a letter dated May 16, 1626. The wind was now changed about, the Spanish match broken off, and Charles had become the husband of Henrietta. “ I thank you for your late letter, and the several good tidings sent me from Wales. In requital I can send you gallant news, for we have now a most noble new Queen of England, who in true beauty is beyond the long-woo'd Infanta ; for she was of a *fading flaxen hair, big-lipp'd, and*

SIDELIGHTS ON

somewhat heavy-eyed ; but this daughter of France, this youngest branch of Bourbon (being but in her cradle when the great Henry, her father, was put out of the world) is of a more *lovely and lasting complexion*, a dark brown ; she hath eyes that sparkle like stars ; and for her physiognomy, she may be said to be a mirror of perfection." He hath a rich account, in another letter, of Prince Charles courting this same Infanta. " There are Comedians once a week come to the Palace (at Madrid) where, under a great canopy, the Queen and the Infanta sit in the middle, our prince and Don Carlos on the Queen's right hand, the king and the little cardinal on the Infanta's left hand. I have seen the prince have his eyes immovably fixed upon the Infanta half an hour together in a thoughtful speculative posture, *which sure would needs be tedious, unless affection did sweeten it.*" Again, of the Prince's final departure from that court. " The king and his two brothers accompanied his Highness to the Escorial, some twenty miles off, and would have brought him to the sea-side, but that the Queen is big, and hath not many days to go. When the king and he parted,

CHARLES LAMB

there past wonderful great endearments and embraces *in divers postures* between them a long time ; and in that place there is a pillar to be erected as a monument to posterity." This scene of royal congées assuredly gave rise to the popular, or reformed sign (as Ben Jonson calls it), of *The Salutation*. In the days of Popery, this sign had more solemn import.

I do not think it is necessary to waste time and ink in demonstrating that the "fine Roman hand" which penned these "Scraps of Criticism" was that of Lamb. If the reader, after perusing them, does not agree with me in my opinion, I can only say that one or other of us must be—well, let me say, wanting in critical insight.

In the number of the *London Magazine* for January 1823, the second part of "The Miscellany" appeared. From this I make the following selection of pieces, which are, I think, almost certainly by Lamb :

THE CHOICE OF A GRAVE.

In Fontenelle's "Dialogues of the Dead,"

SIDELIGHTS ON

Mary Stuart meets Rizzio, and by way of reconciling him to the violence which he had suffered, says to him : "I have honoured thy memory so far as to place thee in the tombs of the Kings of Scotland." "How," says the musician, "my body entombed among the Scottish Kings?" "Nothing more true," replies the Queen. "And I," says Rizzio, "I have been so little sensible of that good fortune that, believe me, this is the first notice I ever had of it."

I have no sympathy with that feeling, which is nowadays so much in fashion, for picking out snug spots to be buried in. What is the meaning of such fancies? No man thinks or says that it will be agreeable to his dead body to be resolved into dust under a willow, or with flowers above it. No—it is, that while alive he has pleasure in such anticipations for his cox-comical clay. I do not understand it—there is no *quid pro quo* in the business to my apprehension. It will not do to reason upon, of course; but I can't feel about it. I am to blame, I dare say, but I can only laugh at such under-ground whims. "A good place" in the churchyard!—the boxes!—a front row! but why? No, I cannot understand it: I cannot feel *particular* on such a subject: any part for me, as a plain man says of a partridge.

CHARLES LAMB

WILKS.

It is very pleasing to discover redeeming points in characters that have been held up to our detestation. The merest trifles are enough, if they taste but of common humanity. I have never thought very ill of Wilks since I discovered that he was exceedingly fond of South-Down mutton. But better than this: "My cherries," he says, "are the prey of the blackbirds—and they are most welcome." This is a little trait of character, which, in my mind, covers a multitude of sins.

OBITUARY.

Lately died at Strasburgh, in the thirty-first year of his age, the celebrated Italian philosopher Popolino. He had been employed on certain poisonous and other pungent experiments, for the benefit of the red Indians and the civilised inhabitants of Antiqua Scotia. His preparations were generally in the shape of a powder (for the sake of its bearing land-carriage), and on applying some of what he conceived to be No. 37 to his nostrils, he fell down and

expired in a moment. The world will long have cause to lament the premature decease of this great philosopher and sage. A few particulars of his early life have escaped ; and as we believe that they are not generally known in England, we shall lay them before our readers.

Pietro Pinto Popolino was born in the neighbourhood of Peschiera, in the north of Italy, in the midst of the cold weather of 1791. His father claimed (and he insisted) on being descended in a right line from the famous Gasco Mendez, formerly one of the self-elected Dukes of Trieste. When very young, scarcely exceeding the tender age of eleven years, young Popolino, it is said, used to sing the verses of Catullus in an extraordinary way, and to accompany them with his violin. It was confidently expected that he would become a shining ornament in the musical circles. One day, however, he became acquainted with two travellers from North Britain, who were regaling themselves with a "haggis," or rather an olla podrida, (the landlord was a Spaniard,) and some pickled herrings, in the "public" at Peschiera. These gentlemen took great

CHARLES LAMB

quantities of snuff, which seemed to enable them to argue with infinite vivacity. Young Popolino begged a pinch, and sneezed. He begged another, and sneezed again. This seemed to him very extraordinary. Begging a third pinch, he put it carefully in a small piece of whity-brown paper, and took it home, with a determination to ascertain what its peculiar virtues were. This trifling incident it was which turned this genius into the road of practical philosophy. A few years afterwards he came over to England, and entered himself as a pupil of the celebrated Fribourg. He became the inventor of "Canàster," of No. 37, of "The Floral Mixture," and even made some improvements in "high-dried." He was a great advocate for the system of driving out one disease by another; and invented a poison (made of the "Lamas" and the "Ticunas"—Indian specifics) which, had it been adopted, would have completely put the measles to flight, and expatriated the hydrophobia. He was the only person acquainted with the virtues of Dr. Solomon's Balm of Gilead, and Dr. Brodum's nervous cordial. He was the inventor of Day and Martin's blacking, and

the Congreve rockets (he sold the patents to the present proprietors). He was the first man who perceived the connection between the Aurora Borealis and the French Revolution. He constructed the automaton chess-player and the invisible girl, and gave the first hint of lighting London with gas. He was an excellent arithmetician, a sound theologian, a good poet and whist-player, a tender father of a family, and a virtuous man. He has left a wife and seventeen small children to lament his death, which will be long felt, not only by them, but by the whole scientific and literary world. He is buried in the Protestant church at Strasbourg, and a tomb, with an elegant inscription, by Messrs. Mokriffchusky and Price, (proprietors of the Russia oil,) has been erected to his memory.

Gust. Vostermann.

* * By the bye, Gasco Mendez, mentioned in that very clever scene, "The Voyage, a Dramaticle," (in your last number,) may be related perhaps to Popolino's ancestor.

G.V.

I do not think there can be any doubt that

CHARLES LAMB

the first two of these pieces are by Lamb. They are entirely in his manner, and their matter is no less consistent with his peculiar temperament and way of thinking. Let the reader try to think of some other author as having written these pieces, and I believe he will acknowledge that he cannot imagine them to have proceeded from any other pen than Lamb's. Were it possible to settle by other evidence than that of style the question of the authorship of "The Choice of a Grave," I should not hesitate to stake my credit as a critic upon Lamb's authorship of it.

As regards the paragraph about Wilkes—whose name Lamb (assuming him to be its author) with customary inaccuracy spells Wilks—I think its parentage can hardly be a matter of dispute. As to the "Obituary," I am willing to allow that Lamb's authorship of it is not so evident as it is in the case of the other "Miscellany" pieces. It is, as it seems to me, a kind of preparatory exercise in that kind of burlesque biography of which the most perfect example is the "Biographical Memoir of Mr. Liston." This "Obituary," like the Liston hoax, is

SIDELIGHTS ON

admirably calculated to deceive a prosaic or literal-minded reader into supposing it to be a serious memoir. The allusion to Dr. Solomon's Balm of Gilead recalls to mind Lamb's epigram, first published in the *Champion*:

On a late Empiric of "Balmy Memory."

His namesake, born of Jewish breeder,
Knew "from the Hyssop to the Cedar ;"
But he, unlike the Jewish leader,
Scarce knew the Hyssop from the Cedar.

I think that the reader, after a little consideration, will agree with me that this "Obituary" was probably written by Lamb: and that it ought henceforth to take its place among his writings beside the memoir of Liston.

In the next number of the magazine I find one other "Miscellany" piece which I venture to attribute to Lamb—though not with so much confidence as in the former cases. It is as follows :

MILTON.

Milton takes his rank in English literature, according to the station which has been

CHARLES LAMB

determined on by the critics. But he is not read like Lord Byron, or Mr. Thomas Moore. He is not *popular*; nor perhaps will he ever be. He is known as the Author of "Paradise Lost;" but his "Paradise Regained," "severe and beautiful," is little known. Who knows his Arcades? or Samson Agonistes? or half his minor poems? We are persuaded that, however they may be spoken of with respect, few persons take the trouble to read them. Even Comus, the child of his youth, his "florid son, young" Comus—is not well known; and for the little renown he may possess, he is indebted to the stage. The following lines (*excepting only the first four*) are not printed in the common editions of Milton; nor are they generally known to belong to that divine 'Masque'; yet they are in the poet's highest style. We are happy to bring them before such of our readers as are not possessed of Mr. Todd's expensive edition of Milton.

The Spirit enters.

Before the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright ærial spirits live insphered
In regions mild of calm and serene air,

SIDELIGHTS ON

Amidst th' Hesperian gardens, on whose banks
Bedew'd with nectar and celestial songs,
Eternal roses grow, and hyacinth,
And fruits of golden rind, on whose fair tree
The scaly harness'd dragon ever keeps
His unenchanted eye: around the verge
And sacred limits of this blissful isle,
The jealous ocean, that old river, winds
His far-extended arms, till with steep fall
Half his waste flood the wild Atlantic fills,
And half the slow unfathom'd Stygian pool.
But soft, I was not sent to court your wonder
With distant worlds, and strange removed climes.
Yet thence I come, and oft from thence behold, &c.

Our readers will forgive us for having modernised the spelling. It is the only liberty that we have taken with our great author's magnificent passage.

I do not, of course, lay much stress upon this piece, which is not remarkable except as an instance of Lamb's well-known devotion to the memory of the great poet—if we conclude, as I think we may, that he was its author.

"The Miscellany" does not seem to have proved a successful feature of the Magazine. It languished through two more numbers—but in neither of these is there anything

CHARLES LAMB

remarkable, nor is there anything which can be attributed to Lamb.

At this point it will be convenient to gather together the chief passages in Lamb's letters which refer to the *London Magazine* and his connection with it. These will show that as time went on he became less and less satisfied with the manner in which it was conducted, and that he felt keenly the dropping off of the best of his fellow contributors. The earliest mention of the *London* which I have found occurs in a letter to John Taylor, the publisher, dated July 21, 1821.* In this Lamb says :

The *London Magazine* is chiefly pleasant to me, because some of my friends write in it. I hope Hazlitt intends to go on with it, we cannot spare Table Talk. For myself I feel almost exhausted, but I will try my hand a little longer, and shall not at all events be written out of it by newspaper paragraphs. . . . This last paper will be a choke-pear to some people, but as you do not object to it, I can be under little apprehension of your exerting your Censorship too rigidly.†

* See Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's "The Lambs," p. 193

† The "choke-pear" was the essay on "Jews, Quakers, Scotchmen, and other Imperfect Sym-

SIDELIGHTS ON

Nine days later he writes to the same correspondent to thank him for sending him some beautiful lines signed "Olen" (Sir C. A. Elton.)* He then proceeds to tell the story of his assumption of the name of his fellow-clerk, Elia—but the passage is too familiar to need reproduction here.

The next reference I have found occurs in a letter to Wordsworth, dated March 20, 1822. Lamb's essay "On some of the Old Actors" had appeared in the February number of the magazine, and Wordsworth had evidently expressed his admiration of it. Lamb says in reply :

You have gratified me with liking my meeting with Dodd. For the Malvolio story—the thing is become in verity a sad task, and I eke it out with anything. If I could slip out of it I should be happy, but our chief-reputed assistants have forsaken us. The Opium-Eater crossed us once with a dazzling path, and hath as suddenly left us darkling ; and, in short, I shall go on from dull to worse, because I cannot resist the booksellers' importunity—the old plea you know of authors, but I believe on my part sincere.

pathies," which appeared in the August number of the *London Magazine*.

* See "Epistle to Elia," in a later chapter.

CHARLES LAMB

Nothing could well be more characteristic of Lamb than his fear that this essay, so admirable for its critical insight, and so vivid in its portraiture, was liable to the charge of dulness. In it he was, I think, consciously measuring himself against Colley Cibber, the best of all stage historians ; and it is sufficient praise for him—as it would be for any one—that he did not fall short of his model. The mention of Thomas de Quincey, is, I believe, the only one that occurs in all Lamb's published letters. Procter, in his *Life of Lamb*, leads us to think that there was never at any time, much intimacy between him and the Opium-Eater, though the latter in his various articles on Elia implies that there was.

The next reference to the *London* occurs in a letter to Bernard Barton, dated March 5, 1823 :

Your poem, which I consider very affecting, found me engaged about a humorous Paper for the *London*, which I had called, "A letter to an *Old Gentleman* whose education had been neglected,"—and when it was done Taylor and Hessey would not print it, and it discouraged me from doing anything else ; so I took up Scott, where I had scribbled some petulant

SIDELIGHTS ON

remarks, and for a makeshift father'd them on Ritson. It is obvious I could not make your poem a part of them ; and as I did not know whether I should be able to do to my mind what you suggested, I thought it not fair to keep back the verses for the chance. Mr. Mitford's Sonnet I like very well, but as I also have my reasons against interfering with the Editorial arrangements of the *London*, I transmitted it, (not in my own handwriting) to them, who I doubt not will be glad to insert it. What eventual benefit it can be to you (otherwise than that a kind man's wish is a benefit) I cannot conjecture.

It is not surprising, I think, that the publishers declined to print the "Letter to an Old Gentleman," * for it is certainly one of Lamb's least felicitous efforts. Who would have guessed it to be his if he had not put his name to it? We value all Lamb's writings in proportion as they are more or less characteristic of their author, and for this reason we could very well spare such failures (or at least comparative failures) as the one I have mentioned, "Reminiscences of Juke Judkins," "The Last Peach," and a

* It was, however, eventually printed in the *London* in the number for January 1825.

CHARLES LAMB

few others. Of some writers we want as little as possible of themselves in their writings—for a man may be a good author and yet an uninteresting person*—of others, as of Montaigne, Burton, and Lamb, we can never have too much.

The poem of Barton's which is alluded to in the above extract is called "A Poet's Thanks." It was suggested apparently by Mitford's Sonnet which was published in the June number of the magazine. In the latter Mitford condoleth with Barton on his misfortune in being condemned to gain his livelihood as a banker's clerk, instead of being free to follow his inclinations as a poet. Foolishly enough the sonneteer compares Barton's situation to that of Tasso in his dungeon, the latter being of the two the more favoured !

Like Captive, my own Bard, art thou : yet he
Had thought, time, feeling, free to count his
chain,
While thine is heavier thralldom, double pain,
Prisoner at once and Slave.

Barton, it would seem, did not see the

* A good author—yes ! but hardly a great one.

SIDELIGHTS ON

absurdity of this comparison. The reader will remember that it was apparently only the earnest protest of Lamb that restrained him from abandoning his clerkship in favour of professional authorship.

Writing again to Bernard Barton on May 3, 1823, Lamb says :—

I cannot but think that the *London* drags heavily. I miss Janus. And oh, how it misses Hazlitt ! Proctor too is affronted.

On September 2, he writes to the same correspondent :—

The *London*, I fear, falls off. I linger among its creaking rafters, like the last rat : it will topple down if they don't get some buttresses. They have pulled down three : Hazlitt, Proctor, and their best stay, kind, light-hearted Wainwright, their Janus. The best is, neither of our fortunes is concerned in it.

Kind, light-hearted Wainwright ! One is glad to think that Lamb died before the disclosure of his friend's heartlessness and depravity. Even so late as 1831 Lamb still retained his faith in him, and recommended Moxon to secure him as a contributor to the *Englishman's Magazine*. It would not have

CHARLES LAMB

been the least of the many sorrows of Lamb's later life if he had become acquainted with the utter worthlessness of the man with whom he had been so intimate and whom he esteemed so highly.

In a letter dated January 23, 1824, he apologises to Barton for having written him a dismal epistle while suffering from illness, and adds :

The fact is, I have been insuperably dull and lethargic for many weeks, and cannot rise to the vigour of a letter, much less an essay. The *London* must do without me for a time, for I have lost all interest about it ; and whether I shall recover it again I know not.

On December 1, of the same year, writing to the same correspondent, he says :—

Taylor and Hessey, finding their magazine goes off very heavily at 2s. 6d. are prudently going to raise their price another shilling ; and having already more authors than they want, intend to increase the number of them. If they set up against the *New Monthly* they must change their present hands. It is not tying the dead carcase of a Review to a half-dead Magazine will do their business.

SIDELIGHTS ON

In a letter to Leigh Hunt dated by Canon Ainger "End of 1824," but which, I suspect, should rather be dated "Early in 1825," Lamb writes :—

They keep dragging me on, a poor worn millhorse, in the eternal round of the damned magazine ; but 'tis they are blind, not I. Colburn (where I recognise with delight the gay W. Honeycomb renovated) hath the ascendancy.*

The "gay W. Honeycomb" allusion refers to a series of Papers by Hunt, which bore the general title of "The Family Journal, by Harry Honeycomb." As the series began in the number of the *New Monthly Magazine* for January 1825, it would seem to fix the date of the letter at some time during that month, or possibly somewhat later.

The following passages from a letter to Miss Hutchinson, which is dated January 20,

* In the same letter Lamb asks about a book which he had sent to Hunt, and enquires what has become of it. "Peradventure the Cardinal Gonsalvi took a fancy to it; his Eminence has done my Nearness an honour." I feel sure that for "Nearness," which is meaningless, so far as I can see, we should read "Meanness."

CHARLES LAMB

1825, are so well known that I would have omitted them if I could have done so without making a serious *lacuna* in this chapter. I think, however, that few of my readers will be unwilling to read again this very characteristic passage :

You ask about the editor of the *London* ; I know of none. This first specimen is flat and pert enough to justify subscribers who grudge t'other shilling. De Quincey's "Parody" was submitted to him before printed, and had his *Probatum*. The "Horns" is in a poor taste, resembling the most laboured papers in the *Spectator*. I had signed it "Jack Horner" ; but Taylor and Hessey said it would be thought an offensive article unless I put my known signature to it, and wrung from me my slow consent. But did you read my "Memoir of Liston?"—and did you guess whose it was? Of all the lies I ever put off, I value this most. It is from top to toe, every paragraph, Pure Invention, and has passed for gospel ; has been republished in newspapers, and in the penny playbills of the night as an authentic account. I shall certainly go to the naughty man some day for my fibbings. In the next number I figure as a Theologian ! and have attacked my late brethren, the Unitarians.

SIDELIGHTS ON

What Jack-Pudding tricks I shall play next, I know not ; I am almost at the end of my tether.

It is hardly necessary to say that De Quincey's "Parody" refers to Lamb's "Letter to an Old Gentleman whose education has been neglected"; or that the "Horns" refers to "A Vision of Horns."

On February 10, 1825, Lamb writes to Barton concerning the "Vision of Horns" :—

I am vexed that ugly paper should have offended. I kept it as clear from objectionable phrases as possible, and it was Hessey's fault and my weakness that it did not appear anonymous. No more of it, for God's sake. . . . I have caused great speculation in the dramatic (not thy) world by a lying "Life of Liston," all pure invention. The town has swallowed it, and it is copied into newspapers, playbills (etc.), as authentic. You do not know the Droll, and possibly missed reading it, (in our first number, New Series). A life more improbable for him to have lived could not be easily invented. But your rebuke, coupled with "Dream on J. Bunyan," checks me. I'd rather do more in my favourite way,

CHARLES LAMB

but feel dry. I must laugh sometimes. I am poor Hypochondriacus, and not Liston. The number is all trash. What are T. and H. about? Why did poor Scott die? There was comfort in writing with such associates as were his little band of scribblers; some gone away, some affronted away, and I am left as the solitary widow looking for watercresses. The only clever hand they have is Darley, who has written on the Dramatists under the name of John Lacy. But his function seems suspended.

Writing to the same correspondent on August 19, 1825, Lamb says :—

Taylor has dropped the *London*. It was indeed a dead weight. It has got in the Slough of Despond. I shuffle off my part of the pack, and stand like Christian with light and merry heart. It had got silly, indecorous, pert, and everything that was bad.

In a letter to Southey, dated August 19, 1825, we have Lamb's last mention (excepting one or two passing references) of the magazine :

The *London Magazine* has shifted its publishers once more, and I shall shift myself out of it. It is fallen.

SIDELIGHTS ON

Lamb's dissatisfaction with the management and contents of the later volumes of the magazine was certainly not without reason. It cannot be denied that there was a great falling off from the standard of the earlier volumes. It was not possible to supply the places of such contributors as De Quincey, Hazlitt, Allan Cunningham, Talfourd, Reynolds, and Cary with others of equal ability, and consequently the magazine steadily declined in character and circulation. It did not, however, as Procter and Canon Ainger have stated, come to an end in 1825. The new publishers, of whom Lamb speaks in the last extract I have quoted, were Messrs. Hunt and Clarke, and the new editor is said to have been Mr. Henry Southern, who was also one of the editors of the "Retrospective Review." Hunt and Clarke continued to publish the magazine until the end of 1827, when it again changed hands. Three or four volumes of this Third Series were published ; but the magazine was finally discontinued in 1829. The last series contains very little matter of interest ; but it is perhaps worth while to note that many of

CHARLES LAMB

Winthrop Mackworth Praed's best poems were first published in these final volumes.

The passage which I have quoted from Lamb's letter to Southey seems to indicate clearly enough that he had determined to close his connection with the *London*. No one hitherto seems to have thought it worth while to examine the later volumes of the magazine to see whether any more of his work could be discovered in them. Indeed, as I have said, most of Lamb's editors seem to have been under the impression that the *London* came to an end in 1825. It seemed to me, however, worth while to go through the later volumes of the magazine in search of articles by Lamb, or which might have some relation to him. As a result I have found two pieces, which I do not indeed venture to ascribe to him, but which are so interesting in themselves and in their relation to him that they are, in my opinion, well worth reprinting. The first of these is found in the number of the *London* for January 1826, and is entitled "A Hint for Whist Players." This is, if nothing else, an interesting sequel to "Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist." It is also, if an imitation, a

SIDELIGHTS ON

remarkably good one of Lamb's manner—and, moreover, an imitation of him in his most characteristic vein. I do not hesitate to assert of this and of the next piece which I shall print that they are, together with the essay already referred to ("Death,—Posthumous Memorials—Children"), the best of all imitations of Lamb. They are, in fact, the *only* successful imitations of Lamb's style with which I am acquainted—for Hood, Procter, and Patmore, whether consciously or unconsciously imitating him, quite failed to catch his spirit or manner,—except perhaps in very brief and intermittent passages.

A HINT TO WHIST PLAYERS.

We,—(I and my constant partner, in love and whist)—have had a long run latterly, like the bankers, of ill luck.—Night after night,—for the cards are of as regular occurrence as our Hyson,—we have lost an average half-dozen of rubbers, without the set-off of one single point against the score.

Probably, it may be hinted here, that we are no adepts,—and it would not become me

CHARLES LAMB

to speak in contradiction.—I confess willingly, on my own behalf, that I am not a Hoyle,—yet, such as we are, jointly, we have overcome players of high repute. Not unto ourselves, but to propitious Fortune we attributed those victories—and now, under our own reverses, we claim to complain, as the “Dabs” did, of a partial dispensation.

I can put up with an occasional bad card-hand, as Job-like as any one. A sorry, solitary deuce of trumps, *now and then*, does not put me beside my tenour. I can go trumpless even once, twice, or thrice, without an imprecation.—I can sort, without pouting, some thirteen rabble-cards, and endure, as heroically as Brightelmstone tradesfolk, a temporary privation of king and court favour.—It would be strange if the losses and crosses I have suffered in human dealings, had not taught me philosophy to endure any reasonable proportion of Whist adversity. If I can reckon up without fretting, the niggardly balances that are made out to me by my bookseller,—I may surely, without chafing, tell over a beggarly account of pips.

My gentle ally—as her mild, placid

SIDELIGHTS ON

countenance might vouch for—exceeds me in resignation. She is the last Whist player in the world to be put out by a fair average of mishaps—but the repeated frowns of fortune—fickle, alas! no more, but against us perversely constant,—have ruffled even my meek partner. The acute mischance may be got over,—but our confirmed ill luck has become chronic. A temporary foul breeze may be worn out patiently,—but a trade wind in one's teeth, what mortal can bear?

There is nothing mortifying, it may be said, in being outshuffled by a pack of paste-board,—that kings, queens, knaves,—two by honours, or all the honours, fall to our adversaries,—is the inevitable result of position in the cards,—and disparages neither skill nor desert of ours. They were ours, they are theirs, and may be ours again. That indeed is the pleasurable alternation in games of see-saw and of chance. But to rest always on the humble ground without any turn in the air—to be invariably cut by the better trumps—to be shunned by the aces, and never visited by the kings—to be sent to Coventry by all good cards—to thrive

CHARLES LAMB

never, and, never thriving, to be sneered at, implicitly by the old scandalous adage,—oh, 'tis intolerable !

What antique sacrifices, or mysterious ceremonious rites, to the filleted goddess have we omitted ? Will she never, *never* again turn for us the tables,—as we have turned often our unwieldy, unlucky chairs ?

I have not yet spoken of our worst grievance :—there is a sore within a sore. It is the grave, demure, hypocritical visages of our conquerors, when they rise up, it may be, from their tenth victory,—that gall us more than our defeat. With prim, serious features, more worthy of a Quaker rite than of Whist settlements,—they pick up, (the buckram dowagers !) and pocket the trophy coin. To judge from our faces,—'tis a drawn game, — a fourfold disappointment — but Whist, as the world knows, is incapable of such lame and impotent conclusions. “Two,” says Mrs. Battle, the eloquent encomiast of Whist, “two are exalted—two again are mortified”—but it would puzzle a disciple of Lavater to say which was which at the close of our melancholy rubbers. As far as physiognomy goes, the winners protest that

they would as lief have forgone the double points, and the money.—They have not achieved success, but had it thrust upon them.—They repent, like Coriolanus, of their conquest.—They begrudge themselves,—or might be supposed to begrudge themselves, their gains,—if it were not a joint object with them to be as successful as sad.—They are loath,—so their formal looks signify,—to put us to the trial of a triumph—or they fear, and half anticipate, the pigeon-like flutter of the whole brood of pasteboard about their wary ears.

If they mean thus—let them know that we hate their sham insincere moderation—we are offended by their uncourteous mistrust. Do they think, forsooth, that we can afford to lose so many shillings nightly—and of *that* they never affect a doubt—but that we are too poor in patience to put up with a simple smile? Is it less an offence to question our good breeding and self-government, than to hint a suspicion of our finances? Is the suppressed chuckle in their sleeves likely to be less provoking than the fair frank laugh against us?—Do they flatter themselves, that we perceived not, in the beginning, their ill-

CHARLES LAMB

concealed gigglings and titterings behind their card-fans, for joy of the lucky distribution?—Did their lurking aces leap out lingeringly, reluctantly, or eagerly upon our untimely queens and kings?—Did they chuckle or sigh, with over-mastering trumps, to cut up the poor remnants of our hopeful suits?—It would be better if they clapped their hands and crowed over us,—bragging would be preferable to their mock-modesty. We scorn their untimely gravity—we resent their insolent humility. Do they think we are not competent to carry off ten times their prosperity, or our own losses, with an equal propriety?—To be sure, say they, the honours fell very much against you, or some such impertinent condolence. Do we or chance need their excuses? do we writhe or blaspheme under our reflections? If at such moments I do betray some tokens of impatience—utter a few peevish pishes—it is because their triumph of temper has “triumphed over mine.”

Is our skill, so notably inferior, to find another explanation for their manners, that our defeat is a joyless and matter-of-course termination! Their good fortune, which

SIDELIGHTS ON

made another result improbable, forbids such an interpretation. Nevertheless, in some rare instances aforetime, when chance favoured us, they have been pleased to express that no skill could compete with such lucky cards as we held, or some speech as tantamount to the assumption.

It is still possible, and for their modesty's sake desirable,—that they are of those lukewarm players, the aversion of Mrs. Battle,—the half-and-half gamesters, “who have no objection to take a hand if you want one to make up a rubber ; who affirm that they have no pleasure in winning ; that they like to win one game and to lose another ; that they can wile away an hour very agreeably at a card-table, but are indifferent whether they play or no.”

There is no offence in that case, to any one but themselves in their listless achievements. They only amuse themselves in a melancholy manner, (as Froissart twits us,) according to the custom of their breed.—But I would rather play, (they must pardon me,) against double dummies—or be beaten by two wooden whist-dolls, cousins to the chess-playing automaton. At any rate, since it is

CHARLES LAMB

all one to their faces and feeling, I would rather that they lost, than *we*, the money and the rubbers. 'Tis my pleasant infirmity not to be proof against the excitements and the depressions of the game. A main good stroke of chance or skill makes me chuckle : I love to mutter a half earnest malediction on an untimely ace. The odd trick makes me rub my palms together. I like to win my battle, and then to have an illumination.

After all, possibly, I have done the dear dowagers an injustice. It is perchance, but some formality-rule of the old buckram-age that compels their features to that demure fashion. The courtly Chesterfield, of sway absolute in their school-time, denounces, I recollect, the vulgarity of audible and hearty laughter ; and at, or after a rubber of whist he may somewhere have forbidden them to smile. 'Tis a maxim, perhaps, in some old Dilworth code of courtesy ; but it is an error in whist-breeding and ought to be expunged. There is a special proverb against it :

“ Let those laugh that win.”

Thomas Pam.

Perhaps there is something wanting in

SIDELIGHTS ON

this essay—an indefinable something which one feels but can hardly describe—which must prevent us from regarding it as a genuine Elia. This is hardly the case, however, with the next essay which I shall print. As I have said, I do not venture to attribute it to Lamb; but I own that I should be glad if I could do so. I do not hesitate to say that it is quite worthy of him. It is quite in his best vein of sympathetic tenderness and unstrained pathos. By whomsoever written, it is—at least] in my opinion—an original and beautiful piece of feeling and fancy. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rescue it from its obscurity.

AN APPEAL FROM THE SHADES

Courteous Stranger,—I have a thing to say ; a wrong to complain of between thy fellows and mine ; but before our thoughts mingle, let me prepare thee for what I am. I have learned not to step too suddenly before the curtain. My nature to human prejudices is somewhat ghastly. By dreary hints and periphrasis, I must lead thee,

CHARLES LAMB

like the guilty royal John, to my revelation :—

—————If the midnight bell
Did with his iron tongue and brazen mouth
Sound One unto the drowsy race of night,—
If this same were a churchyard where we stand,—

then might I with less misgiving unfold myself. Shrieks, groans, aguish fears, not more chilling to thy spirit than to mine, are the penalties of a rash disclosure. Hast thou buried thy thoughts ever with the buried, till the chamber seemed thronged with supernatural presences? Hast thou been in a dream sometimes with those that are gone to “the land of the moles and pismires?”—

I am one of those. I occupy that mysterious parenthesis between the life past and to come, which in mortal language goes by the name of death. With this warning I may now venture to disclose to thee my spectral shape, blurred as it is by the Lethean fogs. Is my paleness so very terrible, or is there anything so fearful as piteous in my unreflecting eyes? Is there aught to shudder at, beside the coldness in my innocent lean hand? What have I on my cheek or lips,

SIDELIGHTS ON

but the not unlovely languor of death,—an expression akin to the pleasant expression of sleep. I come with no rude foot-fall to startle thee,—but the noiseless pace that belongs to our quiet abodes. My voice is only unearthly for that it hath lost all its fretful notes and passionate harshnesses. My garment is as the lily's. Does this snow-white raiment make my visits, or not, the more angel-like,—or must I be held loathsome for want of a more worldly habiliment, and some refuse clay?

Is there any disgusting wormy circumstance about me,—or do I not come purified rather of my mortal slough?

I have no gaping unseemly wound to scare thee withal,—no horrible death-pang imprinted on my visage, but with calm Christian feature as I died, have come above only to solace some old worldly hankerings and regrets. The unforgotten earth has spells potent as those of Endor's hag, that sometimes pluck us from our graves. The summer's springing flowers, with their stirring roots, tug at the buried heart. The merry songs of birds—friendly, family voices—the chime of village bells, and melodious

CHARLES LAMB

fall of waters, have echoes in the spiritual ear—

———True as the shell
To the old ocean's melancholy swell.

The old familiar faces and homely images have their camera in the ghostly organ, and awaken yearnings stronger than the tomb.

Not often we come earthward in enmity. Revenge and hatred, that domineer in hot bloods, are quieter passions in our torpid pulses. Not of ourselves, but at command of divine justice, we arise from our turfy pillows to dog the heels of the unconfessed murderer ; seldomer still do we forsake our peaceful city, to convey unwelcome omens to the living ;—there are croaking ravens enough for that office—to point out a miserly hoard of gold, we rise never ! More kindly and peaceful (though all the Neroes are amongst us) are our midnight errands. There is no nerve now, in the phantom arm,—for a tyrant to drive a dagger,—or to snatch a sceptre from the weakest hand of flesh. The cruel, the unjust, and the crafty, remain therefore in the sullenest shades below ; but the gentle spirit of love is soothed by haunt-

SIDELIGHTS ON

ing the old home and its hearths. These after-relishes of life—these holiday furloughs the kind Death allows us,—and they serve to sweeten some darker passages in our coffin-dreams,—

* * * * *

Thou hast ceased to shiver at me, and it eases my soul. There is but one man in the breathing world, that ought to quake at my apparition, for he knows how greedily his damnable dishonest hand filched once out of my needful portion,—and yet even he, by a moment's manhood, need scarcely tremble at my unsubstantial presence. What avail against his front my shadowy frowns,—nay what availed it, when we met once in the moonlight, that, stung by the proud look of the stately traitor, I sprang up behind him, on his tall white pacing horse, and strove to strangle the triumphing Judas with my ineffectual arms? The pangs of that fruitless effort were all mine. My arch-enemy suffered not even an atom's discomposure ; but swept on with the same scornful feature which I wept, or felt as if I wept, not to have even subdued. Alas ! a wreath of thin wood-smoke is a thing stronger than I !

CHARLES LAMB

If then in malice or indignation we pale vapourish spirits be thus powerless and unhurtful, why should the unguilty living start from us—the kindly familiars that come to them in all love and gentleness? It were a grateful charity, methinks, not to startle us—poor dream-bewildered sleepwalkers from the nether world—but with tenderness to lead us back into our churchyard beds. It were a brave stretch of human hospitality to entertain not the outcast flesh merely, but the fleshless wanderer, more naked than the naked,—from the Stygian coast forlorn. Shall there be no refuge for the uttermost destitution?—Can the houseless have a claim above the worldless?

And yet, when my boon companions of old times remember me in their cups, and dedicate the solemn draught to my memory, they would start with bristling horror from their seats, to behold me sitting in my accustomed chair.

Would they not have me sensible of the invocation?—Or is theirs but the cant of sentiment, lavished upon vacancy? We have no such cold manners even in our bleak precinct. How would it become the cold

SIDELIGHTS ON

companionship, if when their angels descended amongst us, there were no better cheer for their welcome? But we have cups (such as we have) set ready for them all.

Tell them, I pray, there is something hollow in this. In the body or out of the body they must find a chirping welcome for me still.

Tell them there is some echo of the former mirth, some reflection of the old joys amongst us—though somewhat dimmer, like the sun-beam returned by the ghostlike moon. We are vital memories. The past and imperfect tenses of life make up the present being of the shades. To have lived once makes us immortal. We exist on in dreams—not inaccessible to spiritual pleasures and pains. Alas! our souls smart at our unnatural repulses upon earth. Where our hearts were,—we feel dismal achings and throes, at the death of human fellowship.

Oh my cheerful kindhearted friends, fellow campaigners erst in the merry stirring world, tremble not so wrongfully at a frail ghost's intrusion. Shrink not so abhorringly from his fond hand's impalpable grasp! 'tis for me to shrink, if shrinking must be, from the gross

CHARLES LAMB

mundane clay. 'Tis for me to groan, if groaning must be, that I can bestow on you nothing more hearty than my pale kind looks. Fill up one welcome cup to the home-sick exile that stealeth lovingly amongst you. Soothe the naked phantasy a dream-while, with his accustomed place. Let the amicable phantom dally a season with the old images, —and then, with your kind farewells and a sigh and an alas ! commend him to a peaceful slumber on the Lethean shore !—

Oh my beloved babes ! my Margaret ! wife and children of my love,—shudder no more when my fond doting spirit haunts amongst you ! why call me up so often with sighs and tears, and all the sobbing conjurations of grief and love, from the dark abyss. Why stuff out my vacant garments with my form, and yet tremble at my apparition, but a shade more real ? My soul yearns towards you,—till strong affection tears me from the tomb, but groans, sighs, and speechless ecstasies,—or shrieks more startling to me than cry of chanticler, are obnoxious to my presence. 'Tis no dream, then, that my moans are heard on the wind !—

* * * * *

SIDELIGHTS ON

Patient stranger, farewell. I have made thee my interpreter, and would thank thee, —but I scent the forbidden morn. I may not linger to see its first, faintest, cheerful streak :

————Fare thee well at once.
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near
And 'gins to pale his ineffectual fire,—
Adieu, adieu, adieu !—remember me.

How shall we explain the mystery of this essay ? Either it is Lamb's own—in which case we have a second mystery to account for, namely why he never claimed so fine and characteristic a piece of work—or it was written by one who had so steeped himself in Lamb's ways of thought and expression that it had become easier to him to express himself in Elia's style than in his own. Is it necessary for me to point out the many passages in this "Appeal" which recall the manner and even the words of Lamb to the reader ? I think not—for if I began to do so I should end by quoting nearly the whole essay. I will refer the reader only to the fourth paragraph, beginning "I have no

CHARLES LAMB

gaping unseemly wound " and ending "yearnings stronger than the tomb." I do not think that any one to whom Lamb's writings are familiar can fail to recognise in this passage at least a wonderful echo of the voice of Elia.

Having decided—as I think we must—that "An Appeal from the Shades" is the work of an imitator, we must needs speculate as to who could imitate so successfully so difficult a model. The first name that suggests itself is that of Horace Smith, since he had already (as we have seen) imitated Lamb with a considerable measure of success. I should indeed rather confidently ascribe it to him, were there not a difficulty in the way. Smith, who had been a very frequent contributor to the early volumes of the *London*, appears, like so many others of the original writers in it, to have ceased to contribute to it some time before 1825. He had become instead a contributor to the rival *New Monthly Magazine*. In the number of the *London* for May 1825, Smith's "Gaieties and Gravities" was noticed in so contemptuous a style that it can hardly be supposed that he would again contribute to a magazine

SIDELIGHTS ON

which had reviewed him so mercilessly.* For this reason it would seem very unlikely that he could have been the author of the "Appeal." It is much more unlikely, judging from his feeble attempt to imitate Lamb in his "Rejected Articles," that Patmore could have been its author. Neither could Procter, who had long ceased to contribute to the *London*. There remains Thomas Hood, who might conceivably have written it—though I do not think that he *did* write it. It is certainly not an essay that Hood would have cared to lose the credit of, had he been its author. In default, therefore, of further evidence, I fear that the authorship of the "Appeal," and of "A Hint to Whist Players"—both of which, I feel tolerably certain, were from the same pen—must remain unknown.

The foregoing remarks, the reader will observe, were written while I had no idea that there was any evidence, beyond that of style and sentiment, for attributing the "Appeal" to Lamb. It was, therefore, with

* The writer of the review, oddly enough, selected for special censure some of the articles in the book which had originally appeared in the *London Magazine*.

CHARLES LAMB

no small degree of pleasure that I became acquainted with the fact that there *is* evidence in existence which goes far towards proving that the "Appeal" was really written by Lamb.*

In a letter dated July 16, 1803, which will be found on p. 206, Vol. I., of Canon Ainger's edition of the "Letters," Lamb says :

Dear Rickman,—I enclose you a wonder, a letter from the shades. A dead body wants to return, and be inrolled *inter vivos*. 'Tis a gentle ghost, and in this galvanic age it may have a chance.

I suppose it is needless for me to urge that we have in this passage a sufficiently exact account of "An Appeal from the Shades." I do not see how a more accurate description of it could be comprised within the same number of words. That being so, the evidence of Lamb's authorship becomes almost—I will not say quite—conclusive. There is, it is true, the difficulty that the letter was written in 1803, whereas the

* I must not omit to say that the discovery of this evidence was made by my friend, Mr. Thorn Drury, who kindly communicated it to me.

"Appeal" was published twenty-three years afterwards. It may be urged that it is unlikely Lamb would have kept it by him unpublished for so long a period. But we need not even suppose this. Very possibly it may have been published soon after it was written, in some newspaper or magazine of the time. There is nothing to hinder us from supposing that it was one of those lucubrations, "scattered about in obscure periodicals and forgotten miscellanies," which he declared it to be his intention to resuscitate in the pages of the *London Magazine*. It is possible that with me the wish is father to the thought, for I own that I do wish to think that "An Appeal from the Shades" is Lamb's—but I hope that the reader will agree with me that it has at least as much right to be included henceforth among the works of Lamb as "Pericles" and the other doubtful plays have to be included among the works of Shakespeare.

If we conclude that the "Appeal" is Lamb's, it follows that we are at liberty to suppose that he may have contributed other essays to the *London* after August 1825, when it has hitherto been supposed

CHARLES LAMB

that his connection with the magazine came to an end. It becomes, for one thing, more likely than I have represented it to be that he was really the author of "A Hint to Whist Players." And there is yet one other article which may be Lamb's, although I did not at first intend to refer to it. This paper, which appeared in the number for September 1825, is entitled, "The Sorrows of ** ***" [An Ass]. The subject was a favourite one with Lamb. The reader will remember the essay on "The Ass" which was first published in Hone's "Every Day Book." As to the essay which follows I will not go beyond the suggestion that it is possibly Lamb's, though I should put the case rather more strongly were I not anxious to avoid the charge of an uncritical readiness to accept as his work anything which bears a merely superficial resemblance to his style. I do not think any one will deny that the style of "The Sorrows of ** ***" bears some resemblance to Lamb's, while the sentiments are undoubtedly such as he entertained on the subject. There are, indeed, two or three passages in the essay which might lead us to believe that it is Hood's—as, for instance, the

SIDELIGHTS ON

allusion to the Scotch asses that "lived on a brae"—but I scarcely think it can be his, though I shall not quarrel with any one who chooses to think that Hood was the writer, and that he was here, as in other cases, imitating as closely as he could the style of his friend. With these remarks I will now leave the reader to judge for himself, only begging him, in case he thinks the paper is unworthy of either of the writers whom I have mentioned in connection with it, to consider that its inclusion is at worst an error of excess, and more pardonable, therefore, than an error of omission.

THE SORROWS OF ** ***.

I am the most unfortunate of an unfortunate race. The most wretched of the wretched, who have no rest for the soles of their feet.—Mistake me not—I am no Jew,—would I were but the meanest amongst the Hebrews!—but my unhappy despised generation labours under a sterner, though a similar, curse. We are a proverb and a by-word—a mark for derision and scorn, even to the vilest of those scattered Israelites.

CHARLES LAMB

We are sold into tenfold bondage and persecution. We are delivered over to slavery and to poverty—we are visited with numberless stripes.—No, tender-hearted Man of Bramber!* we are not what thy sparkling eyes would seem to anticipate,—we are, alas! no negroes,—it were a merciful fate to us to be but Blackamoors. *They* have their snatches of rest and of joy even—their tabors, and pipes, and cymbals—*we* have neither song nor dance—misery alone is our portion—pain is in all our joints—and on our bosoms, and all about us, sits everlasting *shagreen*.—Dost thou not, by this time, guess at my tribe—

Dost thou not suspect my *ears*?

I am indeed, as thou discernest, an inferior horse—a Jerusalem colt; but why should I blush to “write myself down an ass?” My ancestors at least were free, and inhabited the desert!—My forefathers were noble,—though it must rob our patriarchs of some of their immortal bliss, if they can look down

* This is a reference to William Wilberforce, who was M.P. for Bramber.—Ed.

SIDELIGHTS ON

from their lower Indian heaven on their
abject posterity !

* * * *

Fate,—I know not whether kindly or unkindly,—has cast my lot upon the coast. I have heard there are some of my race who draw in sand-carts, or carry panniers, and are oppressed by those Coptic vagabonds, the Gypsies,—but I can conceive no oppressions greater than mine.—I can dream of no fardels more intolerable than those I bear ; but think, rather with envy, of the passiveness of a pair of panniers, compared to the living burdens which gall and fret me by their continual efforts. A sand-bag might be afflictive, from its weight—but it could not kick with it, like a young lady. I should fear no stripes—from a basket of apples.—A load of green peas could not tear my tongue by tugging at my eternal bridle. All these are circumstances of my hourly afflictions,—when I am toiling along the beach—the most abject, and starved, and wretched of our sea-roamers—with one, or perhaps three, of my master's cruel customers, sitting upon my painful back. It may chance, for this ride, that I have been ravished from a hasty

CHARLES LAMB

breakfast—full of hunger and wind—having at six o'clock suckled a pair of young ladies, in declines,—my own unweaned shaggy foal remaining all the time unnourished (think of that, mothers!) in his sorry stable. It is generally for some child or children that I am saddled thus early—for urchins fresh from the brine, full of spirits and mischief,—would to Providence it might please Mrs. D——, the Dipper, to suffocate the shrieking imps in their noisy immersion! The sands are allowed to be excellent for a gallop—but for the sake of the clatter, these infant demons prefer the shingles—and on this horrible footing I am raced up and down, till I can barely lift a leg. A brawny Scotch nursery wench, therefore, with sinews made all the more vigorous by the shrewd bracing sea air, lays lustily on my haunches with a toy whip—no toy, however, in her pitiless “red right hand;” and when she is tired of the exercise, I am made over to the next comer. This is probably the Master Buckle—and what hath my young cock, but a pair of artificial spurs—or huge corking-pins stuck at his abominable heels.—No

—gentle knight comes *pricking* o'er the plain.—

SIDELIGHTS ON

I am now treated, of course, like a cockchafer—and endeavour to rid myself of my tormentor ; but the bruteling, to his infernal praise, is an excellent rider. At last the contrivance is espied, and my jockey drawn off by his considerate parent—not as the excellent Mr. Thomas Day would advise, with a Christian lecture on his cruelty—but with an admonition on the danger to his neck. His mother, too, kisses him in a frenzy of tenderness at his escape—and I am discharged with a character of spitefulness, and obstinacy, and all that is brutal in nature.

A young literary lady—blinded with tears, that made her stumble over the shingles—here approaches, book in hand, and mounts me,—with the charitable design, as I hope, of preserving me from a more unkindly rider. And, indeed, when I halt from fatigue, she only strikes me over the crupper, with a volume of Duke Christian of Lunenburg—(a Christian tale to be used so !)—till her concern for the binding of the novel compels her to desist. I am then parted with as incorrigibly lazy, and am mounted in turn by all the stoutest women

CHARLES LAMB

in Margate, it being their fancy, as they declare, to ride leisurely.

Are *these* things to be borne?

Conceive me, simply tottering under the bulk of Miss Wiggins, (who some aver is "all soul," but to me she is all body,) or Miss Huggins—the Prize Giantesses of England; either of them sitting like a personified lumbago on my loins!—Am I a Hindoo tortoise—an Atlas? Sometimes, Heaven forgive me, I think I *am* an ass to put up with such miseries—dreaming under the impossibility of throwing off my fardels—of ridding myself of myself—or in moments of less impatience, wishing myself to have been created at least an elephant, to bear these young women in their "towers," as they call them, about the coast.

Did they never read the fable of "Ass's Skin," under which covering a princess was once hidden by the malice of fairy Fate? If they have, it might inspire them with a tender shrinking and misgiving, lest, under our hapless shape, they should peradventure be oppressing and crushing some once dear relative or bosom-friend, some youthful

SIDELIGHTS ON

intimate or schoolfellow, bound to them, perhaps, by a mutual vow of eternal affection. Some of us, moreover, have titles which might deter a modest mind from degrading us. Who would think of riding, much less of flagellating the beautiful Duchess—or only a namesake of the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire? Who would think of wounding through our sides, the tender nature of the Lady Jane Grey? Who would care to goad Lord Wellington, or Nelson, or Duncan?—and yet these illustrious titles are all worn,—by my melancholy brethren. There is scarcely a distinguished family in the peerage—but hath an ass of their name.

Let my oppressors think of this and mount modestly, and let them use me—*a female*—tenderly, for the credit of their own feminine nature. Am I not capable, like them, of pain and fatigue—of hunger and thirst? Have I, forsooth, no rheumatic aches—no cholics and windy spasms, or stitches in the side—no vertigoes—no asthma—no feebleness or hystericks—no colds on the lungs? It would be but reasonable to presume I had all these, for my stable is bleak and damp—

CHARLES LAMB

my water brackish and my food scanty—for my master is a Caledonian, and starves me,—I am almost one of those Scotch asses that “live upon a *brae* !”

* * * * *

Will you mention these things, honourable and humane Sir,* in your place in Parliament?

Friends of humanity !—Eschewers of West Indian sugar !—Patrons of black drudges,—pity also the brown and grizzle-grey ! Suffer no sand—that hath been dragged by the afflicted donkey. Consume not the pannier-potatoe—that hath helped to overburthen the miserable ass ! Do not ride on us, or drive us—or mingle with those who do. Die conscientiously of declines—and spare the consumption of our family milk. Think of our babes, and of our backs. Remember our manifold sufferings, and our meek resignation—our life-long martyrdom, and our mild martyr-like endurance. Think of the “languid patience” in our physiognomy !——

I have heard of a certain French Metro-

* Mr. Martin is the gentleman addressed, we presume.

SIDELIGHTS ON

politan, who declared that the most afflicted and patient of animals was "de Job-horse :"—but surely he ought to have applied to *our* race the attributes and the name of the man of Uz !

In the sixth volume of the *London* there is, on p. 278, a sonnet entitled "The Ass." This is unsigned, and there is therefore no clue to its authorship beyond internal evidence. I feel pretty sure, however, that the author of "The Sorrows of ** ***" was also the author of the sonnet. The reader will notice the resemblance between the last four lines of the sonnet, and the passage in "The Sorrows" beginning "My ancestors at least were free, and inhabited the desert."

THE ASS.

Poor patient creature, how I grieve to see

Thy wants so ill supplied,—to see thee strain,
And stretch thy tether for the grass, in vain,
Which heaven's rain waters for all else but thee.
The fair green field, the fulness of the plain,
Add to thy hunger ;—colt and heifer pass,
And roll, as though they mock'd thee, on the
grass

CHARLES LAMB

Which would be luxury to the bare brown lane

Where thou'rt imprison'd, humble patient ass,
Cropping foul weeds, and scorning to complain.

Mercy at first "sent out the wild ass free,"

A ranger "of the mountains"; and what crimes
Did thy progenitors, that thou shouldst be

The slave and mockery of latter times ?

I need hardly point out that the ideas and sentiments of this sonnet, and (to some extent) those of "The Sorrows" are, if not derived from, at least similar to those in that early poem of Coleridge's, addressed "To a young Ass," which brought so much ridicule upon him, though the spirit of humanity which informs it should have won pardon for its literary deficiencies. That poem, we may reasonably believe, made a deep impression upon the mind of Lamb when it was most impressionable. Of course this does not prove that he was the author of the two pieces which are printed above ; but it does, I think, somewhat increase the likelihood that he *may* have been their author.

I have now arrived at the end of the pieces in the *London Magazine* which I have ventured—whether on sufficient or insufficient grounds—to ascribe to the pen of Charles

SIDELIGHTS ON

Lamb. I think I have established the claims of most of them to be included henceforth in any complete edition of the works of Charles Lamb, even though they may be relegated to an appendix of doubtful pieces. If it be thought that some of them have but slender claims to the honour I have bestowed upon them, I answer that I was willing to take the risk of including too much rather than too little. After all, I am, like Clive, rather astonished at my own moderation than disposed to think that I have grasped at too much. The articles which I at first marked as being possibly Lamb's, but afterwards rejected, were far more numerous than those which I finally ascribed to him. I have been anxious all along not to spoil a good case by attempting to prove too much. Whatever may be the verdict upon my work I shall always reflect upon it with gratification, since it has given me many hours and days of pleasant occupation, during which I have become acquainted, far more intimately than would otherwise have been the case, with one of the finest-spirited, sweetest-natured, and most lovable of the sons of men.

IV

SOME POETICAL TRIBUTES TO LAMB
FROM THE "LONDON MAGAZINE"

I do not think that any apology is needed for the reproduction of the following poems from the pages of the *London Magazine*. None of them are without merit, and two of them, at least, would deserve to be remembered independently of their subject. In most of them the writers seem to have been inspired to a height beyond their usual level by their friendly enthusiasm for their subject. The first of them, the "Epistle to Elia," which is signed "Olen" was written by Sir Charles Abraham Elton, who contributed many original poems, and many articles on, and translations from, the Greek and Latin poets to the pages of the *London Magazine*. It appears that Taylor, the publisher, sent the poem to Lamb before publication. Lamb, in acknowledging its receipt, wrote thus to Taylor :

SIDELIGHTS ON

You will do me injustice if you do not convey to the writer of the beautiful lines, which I now return you, my sense of the extreme kindness which dictated them. Poor Elia (call him *Ellia*) does not pretend to so very clear revelations of a future state of being as Olen seems gifted with. He stumbles about dark mountains at best ; but he knows at least how to be thankful for this life, and is too thankful indeed for certain relationships lent him here, not to tremble for a possible resumption of the gift. He is too apt to express himself lightly, and cannot be sorry for the present occasion, as it has called forth a reproof so Christian-like. His *animus* at least (whatever becomes of it in the female termination) hath always been *cum Christianis*.

Pray make my gratefulest respects to the Poet (do I flatter myself when I hope it may be M——y* ?) and say how happy I should feel myself in an acquaintance with him. I will just mention that in the middle of the second column, where I have affixed a cross, the line

“ One in a skeleton’s ribb’d hollow coop’d,”

is undoubtedly wrong. Should it not be

“ A skeleton’s rib or ribs ? ”

or

“ In a skeleton ribb’d, hollow-cooped ? ”

* James Montgomery.

CHARLES LAMB

I perfectly remember the plate in Quarles. In the first page *esoteric* is pronounced *esōteric*. It should be (if that is the word) *esotéric*. The false accent may be corrected by omitting the word *old*.

"The Idler's Epistle to John Clare" is also by Elton. Perhaps this poem has scarcely so good a claim as the others to appear in this volume, since it only alludes incidentally to Lamb; but it is so interesting in itself, and from its being addressed to one of the most unfortunate of poets, that I have chosen to lay myself open to the charge of redundancy rather than omit it. Some few allusions in the poem perhaps require a note. "Agnus" of course is Lamb; "Lepus" is Julius Charles Hare; "Herbert" is J. H. Reynolds; and "Nalla" Allan Cunningham. I am not certain as to who are intended by "Our Cambridge Wit" and "Our English Petrarch."

The "Address to Charles Lamb" on his release from the drudgery of the India Office, is by B. W. Procter. It was reprinted in his "English Songs."

No comment is required upon the two

SIDELIGHTS ON

sonnets, though one would like to know by whom the second was written.

Perhaps it should be added that the "Epistle to Elia" appeared in the number of the *London Magazine* for August 1821; "The Idler's Epistle" in August 1824; "To Charles Lamb" in July 1825; Barton's "Sonnet" in February 1823; and the other "Sonnet" in August 1822.

EPISTLE TO ELIA

*Suggested by his Essay, "molle atque facetum,"
on New Year's Eve*

I would, that eye to eye it were my lot
To sit with thee, the chafing world forgot;
While the "grape's uncheck'd virtue"* in the
cup
"Moved itself right," and as the hearth blazed
up,
Ruddying our cheeks, thy witty eloquence
Threw brighter sparkles forth than sparkled
thence.
Such midnights in our beings are inwrought;
Less meant for present bliss than after-thought.
True, they are past—while we laugh on, they fly:
The morning moon has faded from the sky,

* John Woodvil, a tragedy: Act III.

CHARLES LAMB

While at our supper-board, (no *Circe's* sty,
But where old *Horace* might have sate and told
His panic at *Philippi*;) we unfold
The heart's recesses : to our pillows then,
And the sun finds us mix'd with common men.
But this brief night remains ; a thing to tell
And re-enjoy ; a mirth-provoking spell
To call up sympathies in other hours,
And waken joyous laughs in distant bowers.

“ But then *the grave* !—the green lanes, quiet
streets,
Grape-juice, the savour of delicious meats,
The eye-beam's gladdening interchange, the
smile,
Books, folios yet uncut (alas, the while !)
There is an end of these—of these and all :
The *man* survives not his own funeral ;
But a strange phoenix, nay, a goblin-self
Peeps from the shell ; a hollow-whistling elf,
Cold as a moon-beam ; sitting on a cloud,
Of which it seems a part ; a ghost ; a shroud ;
Raw thought ; mind nakedly intuitive :
Is this *to be* ?—to be a man ?—to *live* ? ”—

No—but we like not this same cyprus stole
Wherewith thou dizenest out the future soul :
That soul is *human*—*Elia*, nor disjoin'd
From an organic mould : not formless mind,
But spiritual form : 'tis not our thought,

SIDELIGHTS ON

But our whole self in finer substance wrought :
Not a mere shadow ; a poor conscious name ;
But the identical and feeling *same*.
As well remain a clay-commingling clod,
As mix with Ægypt's old esoteric god,
Soul of the universe, and fleeting wide
Be all divine, yet unidentified ;
Or, like the spectral *lemures* of Rome,
Err from the confines of our loathed home.

Was it for this the Man of Calvary stood,
Touch'd, handled, seen again by flesh and
blood ?
Or that the grave shall heave, the marble
rive,
The dry bones shake, the dead stand forth
alive ?—
The change that takes them shall but re-
create,
Shall superadd, but not annihilate ;
Raise us to height above this mortal span,
The perfect stature of a *heavenly* man.
The hand that made us,—has it lost its skill ?
The Power that bless'd us,—has he lost the
will ?
The same that call'd the Patriarch to his feast
Of air, sea, earth,—his bounty hath not ceas'd
With this breath's gasp :—the friends that
call'd us dear
Have join'd in fresh carousals ; dried the tear

CHARLES LAMB

Superfluous, or impertinent :—Forgot
We moulder ; tomb-stoned, and remember'd
not :

Yet is there One to whom we are not lost—
Though in flames wasted, or by billows tost ;
Who spreads the* mausoleum of his sky
O'er those—to whom their kind a tomb deny ;
Holds them more precious than his brightest
star,
Marks their strown dust, and gathers it from
far.

Yea, there is One, whose never-sleeping eye
Pierces the swathing-clay wherein we lie,
The chrysalis of *man* : and forth we spring,
On no ethereal metaphysic wing ;
A body glorified, but not disguised ;
Angelical, but not unhumanised.
The *creature*, that had the Creator's seal
Imprest upon him ; that with plastic zeal
Softened the marble into flesh ; could give
To canvas tinted glory, and bid live
The faces of the dead ; or skilfully
In dwellings match the geometric bee,
And beautify the space of earth with piles
Cloud-piercing, and eternal as the isles ;
Is *such* a creature goblin-changed ? a sprite
Like th' antick ghostly crew, that cross'd the
sight

* *Cælo tegitur, qui non habet urnam.*—Lucan.
Phars. 7. 819.

SIDELIGHTS ON

Of *Rip van Winkel** in the mountain glen,
Playing at thundering bowls in guise of men,
Close jerkin and protuberant hose, with mirth
Starch'd, dumpish, queer, that smack'd not of
this earth ;

Staring and speechless, with lack-lustre eye,
An uncouth pageant of dull gramarye ?
Or prim as key-stone *angels*, perch'd aloof,
With Atlas palms up-propping th' old church-
roof,

Rouged, hatted, peruqued, sleeved, with cravat
laced,

Girt nathless with a pair of wings, (such taste
And orthodoxy th' elder carvers graced,)
Each smirking at his like ? No, never dream it :
If thou but think this error, O redeem it.
The same, that shadow'd the green leafy dells,
And gave them music sweeter than *thy bells*,
Has furnish'd out thy heaven, by the sweet
name

Of *Paradise*. And thou, too, art the same :
The soul that revell'd in thy *Burton's* page
Shall be alive with thee ; the bard and sage
Thou lovedst here, they wait but thy arrival ;
Thy death shall be a sleep, a self-survival.
Yea—thou shalt stand in pause, when thou
hast set

Thy foot upon heaven's threshold, and beget

* See "a posthumous writing" of *Knickerbocker*, in
the "*Sketch-book*."

CHARLES LAMB

Effaced remembrances of forms and times,
Greetings and partings, in these earthly climes:
And there shall come a rush upon thy brain
Of recollected voices, a sweet pain
Of sudden recognition ; gentle stealings
Of waken'd memory—deep, voluptuous feel-
ings,
Pressures, and kisses, that shall make thee
start
At thy own consciousness, and own, thou
art!—

Shalt thou, ingenuous *Elia!* do this wrong
To one who merits frankincense and song ?
Art thou of those whom the quaint bard, yet
sage,
Much slander'd *Quarles*, pourtrays in mystic
page,
Batavian souls, wing'd infant *frogs*, well hoop'd,
With frill'd skull-cap, well boddiced, and well
loop'd ;
One in a skeleton's ribb'd hollow coop'd ;
One to the low earth leg-lock'd, fain to fly
One striking at its void rotundity
With bended finger, and astonied listening
The tinkling echo, with eyes vacant-glistening ?
Thou art not of them—I forgiveness crave ;
For him, the friendly Angel of the Grave,
His robe is white as fleeces of the flocks ;
The evergreen entwines his raven locks :

SIDELIGHTS ON

There is a quiet in that brow serene
That mocks the sleeping infant's calmest mien ;
The mystery of stillness !—all is there
Soft, pure, seraphic, tender, touching, fair.
A crystal light melts from his fringed eyes
Like gleams, o'er mountain tops, of morning
skies :

He hath a voice that makes the hearer mute,
Low, liquid, lulling, like a midnight flute :
The phial in his hand is not of wrath,
But dropping balm'd elixirs in thy path :
The tears he draws are medicinal tears,
That from the pillow steal remorseful fears ;
That wash the stains of custom and foul sin
Away. Through chinks of thought light enters
in,

Light from the east ; and we look up, and earth
Shows like a den : we strive for second birth,
And fain would spring to those that died before ;
Wading, with Christian, the deep river o'er,
That seems to deepen, to the enlarging shore,
Where stand *two shining ones* : while troops of
light,

As arm-link'd friends, are seen on Zion's height,
Threading the pearly gates and streets of
chrysolite.

The viper, which thou fanciest, is the bold
And beauteous serpent, streak'd with emerald,
jet, and gold ;

His slough is in the brake, his colours in the sun :

CHARLES LAMB

Nay—these are diamond sands that in thy hour-
glass run ;

They glisten with the jewel's lasting dew ;
Joys *lent* to time, not lost ; and others new,
That, like that serpent orb'd, shall still them-
selves pursue.

The feasts, at which thou sitt'st, shall still be
shared

By such as thou dost value ; and unscared
By hooded griefs, that "push us from our
stools,"

Unsoured by knaves and unprofaned by fools.
Thou shalt be human still ; and thou shalt be
(Thine eyes then clear'd with Eden's euphrasy)
Within the sight and touch of him who told
The tale our babes now read ; Ulysses old
Ploughing with homeward keel romantic seas ;
Whether, indeed, blind *Melesigenes*
Greet thee, or bards to whom alike belongs
That hoar abstraction of Troy's scatter'd
songs :

And thou shalt hail that prophet of his kind,
Shakspeare, the man of multitudinous mind :
And she, to thee first lovely and first fair,
Thy *Alice*—she, thy *Alice*, shall be there ;
A woman still, though pure from mortal
leaven,
And warm as love, though blushing all of
heaven.

Olen.

SIDELIGHTS ON

THE IDLER'S EPISTLE TO JOHN CLARE

So loth, friend John, to quit the town ?
Twas in the dales thou won'st renown :
I would not John ! for half-a-crown
Have left thee there ;
Taking my lonely journey down
To rural air.

The paven flat of endless street
Is all unsuited to thy feet ;
The fog-wet smoke is all unmeet
For such as thou ;
Who thought'st the meadow verdure sweet,
But think'st not now.

“ Time's hoarse unfeather'd nightingales ” *
Inspire not like the birds of vales ;
I know their haunt in river dales
On many a tree,
And they reserve their sweetest tales
John Clare ! for thee.

I would not have thee come to sing
Long odes to that eternal spring,
On which young bards their changes ring
With birds and flowers ;
I look for many a better thing
Than brooks and bowers.

* Namely, Watchmen : authority, Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

CHARLES LAMB

Tis true thou paintest to the eye
The straw-thatch'd roof with elm-trees nigh ;
But thou hast wisdom to descry
 What lurks below :
The springing tear, the melting sigh,
 The cheek's heart-glow.

The poets all, alive or dead,
Up Clare ! and drive them from thy head ;
Forget whatever thou hast read
 Of phrase or rhyme ;
For he must lead and not be led
 Who lives through time.

What thou hast seen the world may see,
But guess not what thou still may'st be ;
Some in thy lines a Goldsmith see,
 Or Dyer's tone ;
They praise thy worst ; the best of thee
 Is still unknown.

Some grievously suspect thee, Clare !
They want to know thy form of prayer ;
Thou dost not cant, and so they stare
 And smell free-thinking ;
They bid thee of the devil beware,
 And vote thee sinking.

With smile sedate and patient eye
Thou mark'st the creedmen pass thee by,
To rave and raise a hue and cry

SIDELIGHTS ON

Against each other :
Thou see'st a father up on high,
In man a brother.

I would not have a mind like thine
Thy artless childhood tastes resign,
Jostle in mobs, or sup and dine
Its powers away ;
And after noisy pleasures pine
Some distant day.

And, John ! though you may mildly scoff,
That curst confounded church-yard cough
Gives pretty plain advice, be off !
While yet you can ;
It is not time yet, John ! to doff
Your outward man.

Drugs ?—Can the balm of Gilead yield
Health like the cowslip-yellowed field ?
Come sail down Avon and be healed,
Thou cockney Clare !
My recipe is soon revealed ;
Sun, sea, and air.

What glue has fasten'd thus thy brains
To kennel odours and brick lanes ?
Or is it intellect detains ?
For 'faith I'll own
The provinces must take some pains
To match the town.

CHARLES LAMB

Does Agnus fling his crotchets wild,
"In wit a man," in heart a child ?
Has Lepus' sense thine ear beguiled
 With easy strain ?
Or hast thou nodded blithe and smiled
 At Herbert's vein ?

Does Nalla, that mild giant, bow
His dark and melancholy brow ;
Or are his lips distended now
 With roaring glee,
That tells the heart is in a glow,
 The spirit free ?

Or does the Opium-eater quell
Thy wondering sprite with placid spell ?
Still does * * * * * *
 * * * * *

But Clare ! the birds will soon be flown ;
Our Cambridge wit resumes his gown ;
Our English Petrarch trundles down
 To Devon's valley ;
Why, when the *Mag* is out of town,
 Stand shilly-shally ?

The table-talk of London still
Shall serve for chat by rock and rill ;
And you again may have your fill
 Of season'd mirth ;
But not if spade thy chamber drill
 Six feet in earth.

SIDELIGHTS ON

Come then ; thou never sawest an oak
Much bigger than a waggon-spoke ;
Thou only couldst the Muse invoke
 On treeless fen ;
Then come and aim a higher stroke,
 My man of men !

The wheel and oar by gurgling steam
Shall waft thee down the wood-brow'd stream ;
And the red channel's broadening gleam
 Dilate thy gaze ;
And thou shalt conjure up a theme
 For future lays.

And Rip Van Winkel shall awake
From his loved idlesse for thy sake ;
In earnest stretch himself, and take
 Pallet on thumb ;
Nor now his brains for subjects rake ;
 John Clare is come.

His touch will hue by hue combine
The thoughtful eyes that steady shine,
The temples of Shakspearian line,
 The quiet smile,
The sense and shrewdness which are thine,
 Withouten guile.

And thou shalt have a jocund cup
To wind thy spirits gently up,
A stoop of hock, or claret sup,

CHARLES LAMB

Once in a way ;
And we'll take hints from Mistress Gupp*
That same glad day.

An Idler.

TO CHARLES LAMB

Written over a flask of Sherris

Dear Lamb, I drink to thee,—to *thee*
Married to sweet Liberty !—

What !—old friend, and *art* thou freed
From the bondage of the pen ?
Free from care and toil indeed—
Free to wander amongst men
When and howsoe'er thou wilt,—
All thy drops of labour spilt
On those huge and figured pages,
Which will sleep unclasp'd for ages,
Little knowing who did wield
The quill that traversed their white field ?
Come,—another mighty health !
Thou hast earn'd thy sum of wealth,

* The lady's name is Guppy ; but the rhyme was inexorable, and said Gupp. She is immortalised by the invention of a machine to keep muffins hot over the lid of the tea-urn.

SIDELIGHTS ON

Countless ease,—immortal leisure,—
Days—and nights of boundless pleasure,
Checquer'd by no dream of pain,
Such as hangs on clerk-like brain
Like a nightmare, and doth press
The happy soul from happiness.

Oh ! happy thou,—whose all of time
(Day, and eve, and morning-prime)
Is fill'd with talk on pleasant themes,—
Or visions quaint, which come in dreams
Such as panther'd Bacchus rules,
When his rod is on 'the schools',
Mixing wisdom with their wine ;—
Or, perhaps, thy wit so fine
Strayeth in some elder book,
Whereon our modern Solons look
With severe ungifted eyes,
Wondering what thou seest to prize.
Happy thou, whose skill can take
Pleasure at each turn, and slake
Thy thirst by every fountain brink,
Where less wise men would pause to
shrink.

Sometimes 'mid stately avenues
With Cowley thou or Marvel's muse
Dost walk,—or Gray, by Eton towers,
Or Pope, in Hampton's chestnut bowers,—
Or Walton, by his loved Lea stream :—
Or,—dost thou with our Milton dream

CHARLES LAMB

Of Eden, and the Apocalypse,
And hear the words from his great lips ?

Speak !—In what grove or hazel shade
For “ musing Meditation made,”
Dost wander,—or on Penshurst lawn,
Where Sydney’s fame had time to dawn
And die, ere yet the hate of men
Could envy at his perfect pen ?
Or, dost thou in some London street,
With voices fill’d and thronging feet,
Loiter, with mien ’twixt grave and gay—
Or take, along some pathway sweet,
Thy calm suburban way ?—
Happy beyond that man of Ross,
Whom mere content could ne’er engross,
Art *thou*,—with hope,—health,—“ learned
leisure,”
Friends—books—thy thoughts—an endless
pleasure !
—Yet—yet—(for when was pleasure made
Sunshine all without a shade ?)
Thou, perhaps, as now thou rovest
Through the busy scenes thou lovest
With an idler’s careless look,
Turning some moth-pierced book,
Feel’st a sharp and sudden woe
For visions vanished long ago !—
And then thou think’st how time has fled
Over thy unsilver’d head,

SIDELIGHTS ON

Snatching many a fellow mind
Away, and leaving—what—behind ?—
Nought, alas ! save joy and pain
Mingled ever, like a strain
Of music where the discords vie
With the truer harmony.
So, perhaps, with thee the vein
Is sullied ever,—so the chain
Of habits and affections old,
Like a weight of solid gold,
Presseth on thy gentle breast,
Till sorrow rob thee of thy rest.

—Ay : So it is. Ev'n *I* (whose lot
The fairy Love so long forgot)
Seated beside this Sherris wine,
And near to books and shapes divine,
Which poets and the painters past
Have wrought in lines that aye shall last
Ev'n I, with Shakspeare's self beside me
And One, whose tender talk can guide me
Through fears, and pains, and troublous
themes,—
Whose smile doth fall upon my dreams
Like sunshine on a stormy sea,—
Want *something*,—when I think of *thee* !

May 25, 1825.

C.

CHARLES LAMB

TO ELIA

Delightful Author !—unto whom I owe
Moments and moods of fancy and of feeling
Afresh to grateful Memory now appealing,
Fain would I “ bless thee—ere I let thee go ! ”
From month to month has the exhaustless flow
Of thy original mind, its wealth revealing,
With quaintest humour, and deep pathos
healing
The world's rude wounds, revived Life's early
glow :
And, mixt with this, at times, to earnest
thought
Glimpses of truth, most simple and sublime,
By thy imagination have been brought
Over my spirit. From the olden time
Of Authorship thy Patent should be dated,
And thou with Marvell, Browne, and Burton,
mated.

Bernard Barton.

TO ELIA

Elia, thy reveries and vision'd themes
To Care's lorn heart a luscious pleasure
prove ;
Wild as the mystery of delightful dreams,
Soft as the anguish of remember'd love :

SIDELIGHTS ON

Like records of past days their memory dances
Mid the cool feelings Manhood's reason
brings,
As the unearthly visions of romances
Peopled with sweet and uncreated things ;—
And yet thy themes thy gentle worth enhances !
Then wake again thy wild harp's tenderest
strings,
Sing on, sweet Bard, let fairy loves again
Smile in thy dreams, with angel ecstacies ;
Bright o'er our souls will break the heavenly
strain
Through the dull gloom of earth's realities.

V

SOME FURTHER GLEANINGS FROM
THE "LONDON MAGAZINE"

I propose in the present chapter to string together various notes which I have made in the course of my examination of the contents of the *London Magazine*, and also to reprint some articles from its pages which seem to have a title to be rescued from their present obscurity. These notes will not be confined to Lamb, but will deal also with other persons and subjects. I hope the reader will find them of sufficient interest to acquit me of the charge of mere bookmaking. I believe I have gone over the pages of the *London Magazine* more carefully than any one else has done since it was first published; and my notes may at least save some trouble to future investigators.

On p. 325 of vol. ii. of the *London Magazine*

there is to be found a rhymed "Address," which was spoken at the English Opera House by Miss Kelly. This is without signature,—and, beyond the fact that it is evidently the work of a clever and practised versifier, there is no clear indication in it from which its authorship may be inferred. The circumstance that Lamb was a great friend of Miss Kelly makes one think of him as having been possibly its author, and I, for one, should be very willing to believe it to be his. But it is more likely to have been the work of John Hamilton Reynolds, who was also a friend of Miss Kelly, and who was much interested in theatrical matters.* Of course it may have been the work of neither ; but I do not know of any other contributor to the *London Magazine* who was likely to have written it. I print it then chiefly for the sake of its speaker, for whom the lovers of Elia must

* H. C. Robinson, in his "Diary" (vol. iii. p. 19), records, under date Jan. 31, 1833, that he paid a visit to the Strand Theatre, where Miss Kelly was giving an entertainment. Parts of it, he says, were so much in Lamb's manner that he thought they must have been written by him ; but he found afterwards that Reynolds was the author.

CHARLES LAMB

always have a liking, if only because she was the original of his "Barbara S——"

ADDRESS SPOKEN, IN THE CHARACTER
OF THE COMIC MUSE, BY MISS KELLY,
AT THE ENGLISH OPERA HOUSE.

* * The lines in inverted commas are omitted
* by Miss Kelly.

"The times are out of joint!"—So Shakespeare
said,

E'en when the limbs of Wit were finely made ;
Shakespeare ! whose fancy exquisitely wrought
Those fine ideal statues of bright thought,
Which, struck with power, by patient grace
refined,

Stand now the antique models of the mind !
The times *are* out of joint ! For limping Wit
Halts o'er the vacant stage and desert pit ;
And cold distorted Humour feebly seeks
To call up vanish'd laughter on stern cheeks.
Folks sometimes dig up relics strange and vast,
Relics of man, huge remnants of the past ;—
A giant boot,—a teapot that would make
Tea of the river Lea or Keswick lake ;
And these denote what Brobdignags existed
In times when such a boot prevail'd as this
did.

SIDELIGHTS ON

So, when all London shall be earthed down,
And farmers reap their wheat above the
town,—
And golden barley nod its ears of grain
O'er spots, where man hath stretch'd his ears in
vain :—
Some digging soul shall strike his spade,—a
hard one—
Against the slated roof of Covent Garden ;—
Or, labouring in an agricultural fury,
Turn up a tile upon the top of Drury !
Then natives, startled at the news, will crowd,
Peep through the aperture, and cry aloud,—
“ What houses !—dear !—in those tremendous
days,
How great, how matchless, *must* have been
their plays.
Oblivion will have lock'd within her den
All trace of *Bluebeards* and of *Miller's Men* ;
And folks will think, poor simples ! that then
wit
And sense were,—*in proportion to their pit* !
“ Oh ! for the good old times, when Congreve's
wit
“ Play'd like a summer lightning through the
pit ;
“ And Farquhar's sweet familiar pleasantry
“ Taught human hearts how happy they might
be ;—

CHARLES LAMB

" And Cibber idled in that easy style,
" Which makes the very mind to dream and
smile ! "

All—all is o'er ! And when anon I meet
A shop, in some ideal Monmouth-street,—
Where, when the Muse is straiten'd by dis-
tresses,
The utmost price is given for fancy dresses ;—
I'll sell all, all,—mask, humour, sock, and hope ;
And part with the good-will,—and shut up
shop !

But *is* all hope betray'd ?—And may I not
Yet see the dawning of a happier lot ;—
May I not make this summer house my own,
Spite of the wint'ry managerial frown
Of Alexandrine seasons, which do wrong
Without remorse, and " drag slow lengths
along ! "

Yes !—here shall be my home—my spirit here,
Shall laugh to nought the lengthening wint'ry
year,—

Bring but *your* hearts, and I'll find song and
mirth

To keep a little summer yet on earth !

The next piece I shall quote was called
forth by the death of Keats, and appeared
in the number of the *London Magazine* for
April 1821. I should like to attribute this

SIDELIGHTS ON

to Lamb, if I could, and since it is signed "L." I should not be altogether without justification if I did so. Lamb did on at least two occasions sign his contributions to the *London Magazine* with the initial "L." But the evidence of style in this case forbids us to think that he could have been the writer. Of course one would hardly expect, in such a hasty notice, to find the most characteristic qualities of its author displayed; but I think that if Lamb had written it, there would have been in it a sentence or two the peculiarities of which would have discovered his craftsmanship. Probably it is the production of B. W. Proctor, who certainly used the signature "L." in the *London Magazine* occasionally. Let the intrinsic interest of the piece then excuse its reproduction here—if excuse is required.

TOWN CONVERSATION

DEATH OF MR. JOHN KEATS

We commence our article this month with but a melancholy subject—the death of Mr. *John Keats*.—It is, perhaps, an unfit topic to

CHARLES LAMB

be discussed under this head, but we know not where else to place it, and we could not reconcile ourselves to the idea of letting a poet's death pass by in the common obituary. He died on February 23, 1821, at Rome, whither he had gone for the benefit of his health. His complaint was a consumption, under which he had languished for some time, but his death was accelerated by a cold caught in his voyage to Italy.

Mr. Keats was, in the truest sense of the word, A Poet.—There is but a small portion of the public acquainted with the writings of this young man ; yet they were full of high imagination and delicate fancy, and his images were beautiful and more entirely his own, perhaps, than those of any living writer whatever. He had a fine ear, a tender heart, and at times great force and originality of expression ; and notwithstanding all this, he has been suffered to rise and pass away almost without a notice ; the laurel has been awarded (for the present) to other brows : the bolder aspirants have been allowed to take their station on the slippery steps of the temple of fame, while he has been nearly hidden among the

crowd during his life, and has at last died, solitary and in sorrow, in a foreign land.

It is at all times difficult, if not impossible, to argue others into a love of poets and poetry : it is altogether a matter of feeling, and we must leave to time (while it hallows his memory) to do justice to the reputation of Keats. There were many, however, even among the critics living, who held his powers in high estimation ; and it was well observed by the Editor of the *Edinburgh Review* that there was no other Author whatever whose writings could form so good a test by which to try the love which any one professed to bear towards poetry.

When Keats left England he had a presentiment that he should not return : that this has been too sadly realised the reader already knows.—After his arrival in Italy he revived for a brief period, but soon afterwards declined, and sunk gradually into his grave. He was one of three English poets who had been compelled by circumstances to adopt a foreign country as their own. He was the youngest, but the first to leave us. His sad and beautiful wish is at last accomplished : it was that he might

CHARLES LAMB

drink "of the warm south," and "leave the world unseen,"—and—(he is addressing the nightingale)—

"And with thee fade away into the forest dim :
Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou amongst the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new love pine at them beyond to-morrow."

A few weeks before he died a gentleman, who was sitting by his bedside, spoke of an inscription to his memory, but he declined this altogether,—desiring that there should be no mention of his name or country ; "or if any," said he, "*let it be—Here lies the body of one whose name was writ in water!*"—There is something in this to us most painfully affecting ; indeed the whole story of his later days is well calculated to make a deep impression. It is to be hoped that his biography will be given to the world, and also whatever he may have left (whether in poetry or prose) behind him. The public is

SIDELIGHTS ON

fond of patronising poets ; they are considered in the light of an almost helpless race ; they are bright as stars, but like meteors :

“ Short-lived and self-consuming.”

We do not claim the *patronage* of the public for Mr. Keats, but we hope that it will now cast aside every little and unworthy prejudice, and do justice to the high memory of a young but undoubted poet. L.

In the eighth volume of the *London Magazine* appeared (p. 497) Lamb's critical note “ On a Passage in ‘ The Tempest. ’ ” In the same volume (p. 635) there is a note signed “ Lælius,” in which Lamb's explanation of the passage is disputed, and the writer gives a different solution of the enigma. I think that this note is of sufficient importance to deserve reproduction. Whether Lamb's or Lælius's solution is the true one I do not feel called upon to decide ; but I think that the latter writer makes out a case that deserves careful consideration.

CHARLES LAMB

NOTE TO ELIA, ON THE "PASSAGE
IN THE TEMPEST."

Sir,—In reading the last number of the *London Magazine*, I was much struck by the elucidation of a passage in the *Tempest*, proposed by you ; more, I confess, by its ingenuity than its truthfulness, for we all have our different theories on such passages, and self-complacency makes each think *his own* the true one. Will you permit me to offer *mine* to your notice. First, however, I will take the liberty of stating my objections to *yours*. The beautiful application you make, of an historical fact to the solution of this poetic difficulty, is too much of a mere *hypothesis*, calculated more to inveigle than convince the judgment. At the same time, it would be presumption, and I do not take it upon me, to assert that your hypothesis is absolutely a false one. It *may* give the true solution of the passage ; but how are we to know that it does ? The fashion so prevalent among critics of violently denouncing one commentary or elucidation, to exalt another,

has always appeared to me very absurd, and will, I am sure, to others, when the inadequacy of words clearly to express, and accurately to define our ideas, is considered. It is evident to me, that the very same sentence must frequently be capable of more than one meaning ; especially in poetry or eloquence, where propriety of language is transgressed by prescription, and whose very essence consists in a perpetual abuse of speech. The passage in the *Tempest* is a good instance of this ambiguity ; it will suit your hypothesis, as well, perhaps, as any other explanation which can be given of it. Shakespeare *might* certainly have "come fresh from reading some *older narrative* of this deliverance of Algier by a witch," and *might* have "transferred the merit of the deed to his Sycorax ;" nor are his words of so determinate a character as to render such an hypothesis either impossible in fact, or improbable. I therefore do not feel myself warranted in rejecting your sense of the lines, as inadmissible or incorrect. But if there is another sense, which can be fairly put upon the passage, *as convenient* to the words as this, and *less dependent* on hypo-

CHARLES LAMB

thetical conjecture of what *might* have been passing in the author's mind when he wrote it—we are bound by all the laws of just criticism to give it the preference. I am so much the partisan of my own theory, as to think that *such a sense* is that which I am about to propose. Besides, you will perhaps agree with me, that it is not quite in Shakespeare's manner to afford his readers such brief and ambiguous hints upon historical matters, as this would be, were your sense of the passage adopted ; he is always fond of showing his learning, without much respect either to place or occasion, and would most probably have given the history of the Witch of Algiers in full, had her image been in his mind. Does it not also appear somewhat subversive of your theory, that in his work, Ogilby neglects quoting the "older narrative," which you suppose the "dramatist had come fresh from reading," if such narrative ever existed ? His obscure authorities are apparently all Flemings or Spaniards, who probably accompanied Charles to Algiers. Here, you see, in this supposition of an older narrative, is a *second* hypothesis, another air-built castle on the top of the first one. However, without

SIDELIGHTS ON

more ado, let me bring forth my own *ridiculus mus*, and have done. The sense which I always attributed to the passage is this ; *uno verbo*, the Witch Sycorax was *pregnant* ;— and that humanity which teaches us to spare the guilty mother for the sake of her embryo innocent, was imputed by Shakespeare to the Algerines on this occasion. Let us see how the context bears out this explication :

Prospero. Hast thou forgot
The foul witch Sycorax, who, with age, and envy,
Was grown into a hoop ? hast thou forgot her ?

Ariel. No, sir.

Pros. Thou hast ; Where was she born ? speak ; tell me.

Ar. Sir, in Argier.

Pros. Oh, was she so ? I must,
Once in a month, recount what thou hast been,
Which thou forget'st. This damn'd witch, Sycorax,
For mischiefs manifold, and sorceries terrible
To enter human hearing, from Argier,
Thou know'st, was banish'd ; for one thing she did,
They would not take her life : Is this not true ?

Ar. Ay, sir.

Pros. This blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child,
And here was left by the sailors.

Do you not think, Sir, that this text fully substantiates my theory, and that it is no longer necessary to resort to an hypothesis for the elucidation of the passage—

CHARLES LAMB

—for one thing she did,
They would not take her life.

The "one thing she did" is evidently what Shakespeare in his Merchant of Venice, with great delicacy calls "the deed of kind;" and this sense, though by no means obvious, is justly inferrible from the context. Why then should it not be preferred? I have not been able to discover any thing in the rest of the piece inconsistent with the meaning here attributed to these lines; you, perhaps, may be more successful. A friend objected to me, that the law is—to spare the mother *only* till the birth of her child, and therefore that the Witch, instead of being exiled at once, would have been kept till she was delivered, and then punished with death for her " manifold mischiefs." But poets are not expected to dispense justice with such nice and legal discrimination—not to speak of what might have been the immediate necessity of expelling Sycorax from the Algerine community, either by death or banishment; the former of which was forbidden by the existing circumstances of her situation.

Hoping to have made a convert of you, by the above more simple and less conjectural

SIDELIGHTS ON

explanation of this obscure passage, and most heartily agreeing with you on the general ineptitude of the notes and commentaries which overwhelm the text of Shakespeare,

I remain, Sir, with great respect,

Your humble servant,

Lælius.

I do not think that the history of William Hazlitt's connection with the *London Magazine* has yet been traced as carefully as it might be. I think it is probable that a careful search through it would disclose a good many unknown contributions of his to its pages. Such a search I do not pretend to have made : but I have jotted down a few notes on the subject which will perhaps be found of use by future inquirers.

B. W. Procter, speaking of the contributors to the *London Magazine* in his "Memoir of Charles Lamb," says of Hazlitt, that "he wrote all the articles which appear under the head 'Drama' ; the twelve essays entitled 'Table Talk' ; and the papers on Fonthill

CHARLES LAMB

Abbey, and on the Angerstein pictures, and the Elgin marbles." Procter here claims at once too little and too much, for Hazlitt undoubtedly contributed other articles to the magazine, besides those which are mentioned ; but he certainly did not write *all* the dramatic notices. In fact he wrote only the articles on the drama which appeared in the first twelve numbers of the magazine. These articles are eleven in number, there being no dramatic notice in the part for November 1820. It would be a matter of doubt indeed, whether all these articles were by Hazlitt, had we not his express statement on this point. The articles bore various signatures, such as "L. M.," "L.," "T.," and "M." The last article, however, was signed "W. H.," and in it the writer claimed the authorship of all the previous articles, save that in the September number, which is stated to have been written by a friend. In the final article Hazlitt declared his intention of discontinuing the series—and I believe that none of the later dramatic notices in the magazine were written by him.

Hazlitt as a writer and critic was at his best during the time that he was contributing

to the *London Magazine*. The critical notices of the drama that appeared in its pages have been only partially reproduced ; but it is to be hoped that in the new edition of Hazlitt's works which is now in course of publication they will be reprinted in full. The writers on the stage whose works are able to interest readers that care nothing for the subject itself, may be counted on the fingers of one hand—and will even then leave one, if not two, fingers uncounted. Colley Cibber, Lamb, Hazlitt, and (perhaps) Leigh Hunt, sum them all up ; at least I know of no other English writers who deserve to be mentioned in the same breath with these. Of the modern writers we must, I think, give the palm to Hazlitt ; not indeed that he wrote on the stage better than Lamb ; but simply because he wrote much more extensively on the subject. He enjoyed nothing more and few things so much as seeing theatrical performances and writing about them ; and he always succeeds in imparting some portion of his own pleasure to the reader. If it were indeed the chief aim of life, as Walter Pater thought it should be, to compress into it the greatest possible number of vivid sensations, then the

CHARLES LAMB

life of Hazlitt was almost an ideal one. His last words : " Well, I have had a happy life," which seem so astonishing at first, become intelligible when we consider how many sources of enjoyment he had, and how keen was his relish of them.

Some of the reviews of books in the *London Magazine* were, I believe, written by Hazlitt, though I judge this from internal evidence alone, inasmuch as they bear no signature. One of these reviews is so remarkable and so characteristic of its author that I think it is well worth dwelling upon. It appeared in the number of the *London Magazine* for February 1823, and was a notice of Scott's " Peveril of the Peak." Hazlitt's feelings towards Scott were of a very mixed kind. He could not help admiring his genius, but it was with a grudging and unwilling admiration. He smarted much under the attacks which the writers in *Blackwood's Magazine* had directed against him, and he had persuaded himself that Scott, if not one of his actual assailants, at least incited or urged on others to attack him. This was, of course, an unfounded notion ; but it so acted on the moody and mistrustful tempera-

ment of Hazlitt that it became a fixed idea with him. He was, I need not say, a good hater, and, as even his friends found, never disposed to moderate his language out of respect for the feelings of others. In the review of "Peveril of the Peak" he took occasion to liberate his pent-up spleen against Scott in a manner which can only be described as amazing. Even the critics of Keats and Shelley did not infuse more venom into their articles than Hazlitt did in attacking Scott. Yet it is remarkable that while assailing Scott's personal character with extreme virulence he was yet quite capable of doing justice to his literary powers. The review begins thus :

The author of "Waverley" is here himself again ; and it is on English ground that he has come upon his feet. "Peveril of the Peak" is all but equal to the best of the Scotch Novels. It is no weaving up of old odds and ends ; no lazy repetition of himself at second-hand, and *the worse for the wear*. Peveril is all new, good, full of life, spirit, character, bustle, incident and expectation ; nothing is wanting to make it quite equal to the best of his former productions, but that it has not the same

CHARLES LAMB

intense interest, nor the same preternatural and over-powering imagery. . . . The present novel comes the nearest to "Old Mortality," both in the class of subjects of which it treats, and in the indefatigable spirit and hurried movement of the execution. It differs from that noble masterpiece in this, that Sir Walter (or whoever else, in the devil's name, it is) has not infused the same depth or loftiness of sentiment into his English Roundheads and Cavaliers, as into his Scotch Covenanters and Royalists ; that the characters are left more in the outlines and dead colouring ; and though the incidents follow one another as rapidly, and have great variety and contrast, there is not the same accumulation of interest, the same thickening of the plot, nor the same thronging together of eager and complicated groups upon the canvas. His English imagination is not so fully peopled with character, manners, and sentiment as his Scotch understanding is ; but, by the mass, they are not "thinly scattered to make up a show !" There is *cut and come again*.

There is more to the same effect ; and it is hardly possible not to admire the art with which the writer heaps praise upon his victim in order to enhance the effect of the denunciation which follows :—

SIDELIGHTS ON

There were two things that we used to admire of old in this author, and that we have had occasion to admire anew in the present instance—the extreme life of mind or naturalness displayed in the descriptions, and the magnanimity and freedom from bigotry and prejudice shown in the drawing of the characters. This last quality is the more remarkable, as the reputed author is accused of being a thorough-paced partisan in his own person—intolerant, mercenary, mean; a professed toadeater, a sturdy hack, a pitiful retailer or suborner of infamous slanders, a literary Jack Ketch, who would greedily sacrifice any one of another way of thinking as a victim to prejudice and power, and yet would do it by other hands rather than appear in it himself.*

There is a good deal more of this; but I have surely quoted enough, if not too much. It was possible for the author to say more, but it was not within his power to add to the concentrated venom of the sentence I have quoted. Knowing what we know now of Sir Walter Scott it seems almost incredible

* In his "Spirit of the Age," Hazlitt repeated much of what he had said in the review of "Peveril of the Peak," but in a much milder form.

CHARLES LAMB

that Hazlitt could have so misapprehended his character. But Hazlitt, like Cobbett, had in an extreme degree the defects of his qualities. No writer ever surpassed him in the vigour, directness, and masculine energy of his style. His sentences tell on the reader's mind, as the blows of a sledge-hammer tell upon the metal on a blacksmith's anvil. The pity was that his blows were sometimes aimed amiss, and his force was expended in striking at phantoms created by his imagination. Yet, though he might, as Lamb said, do bad actions, he was certainly far from being a bad man. His intellect was too often dominated by his passions ; but however he might be mistaken, it is certain that he always believed what he said, and that he was never tempted by mercenary considerations to write against his convictions. He had indeed such a passion for telling the truth, as he conceived it, that he would tell it when it was his interest, nay, even when it was his duty to refrain from telling it. Friendly as he was with Coleridge and Wordsworth he attacked them with a bitterness almost surpassing that of their worst enemies. In their cases, as in

Scott's, he thought apparently that the praise he bestowed upon them was more than an atonement for his censure. He did not reflect or remember that the minds of most men are so constituted that praise is almost invariably discounted, while censure is accepted at more than its proper value. In Crabb Robinson's "Diary" there is a passage which is too apposite not to be quoted in this connection :—

We talked of Hazlitt's late ferocious attack on Coleridge, which Lamb thought fair enough, between the parties ; but he was half-angry with Martin Burney for asserting that the praise was greater than the abuse. " Nobody," said Lamb, " will care about or understand the 'taking up the deep pauses of conversation between seraphs and cardinals,' but the satire will be universally felt. Such an article is like saluting a man, ' Sir, you are the greatest man I ever saw,' and then pulling him by the nose."

The article on Scott's "Peveril" was the cause of much trouble to the proprietors of the *London Magazine*. It was, it appears, sent in very late in the month, so that it went to the printers without examination. As

CHARLES LAMB

soon as the offensive passages about Scott were discovered the page containing them was cancelled, and a new one, in which they were omitted, was substituted. A few copies of the magazine had, however, already been distributed and these it was found impossible to recall. More than a year afterwards one of these uncanceled copies fell into the hands of a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*. It was much too good a cudgel with which to belabour the rival magazine to be neglected—and therefore an article appeared in which the offensive passages were quoted, and their writer was held up to the scorn and execration of the readers of *Blackwood's Magazine*. The review, absurdly enough, was attributed to the pen of John Taylor, the leading proprietor of the *London Magazine*; and he was accused of blackguardism for having written it, and cowardice for having suppressed it. To this Taylor replied by denying the charge, and by explaining the facts as given above. The review, he said, was written by “a celebrated critic,” and the offending passages were suppressed, not out of fear, but out of a feeling of respect for Sir Walter Scott. So the matter appears to have

ended ; but it seems to have led to the breaking of Hazlitt's connection with the *London Magazine*. At all events I can find but one other article from his pen which appeared in the magazine subsequently to the review of "Peveril of the Peak."

It is well known that there was for a time (apparently between 1814 and 1823) a certain coolness in the relations between Lamb and Hazlitt. There does not seem to have been any open quarrel, and, so far as can now be ascertained, Hazlitt only was to blame for the estrangement. I do not think that the cause—or at least one of the causes—of this temporary coolness between them has ever been pointed out. I believe, however, that it can be inferred from a letter of Hazlitt's to John Scott, which is printed in Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's "Four Generations of a Literary Family." In this letter, which is dated by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt April 12, 1820, the writer says : "Do you keep the Past and Future? You see Lamb argues the same view of the subject. That 'young master' will anticipate all my discoveries, if I don't mind." "The Past and Future," which is here alluded to, is one of the

CHARLES LAMB

essays that first appeared in Hazlitt's "Table Talk" when published in 1822. It is evident from the letter that the author had sent it to Scott as a proposed contribution to the *London Magazine*, though that gentleman did not find it suitable for publication there. But what does Hazlitt's reference to Lamb mean? A perusal of "Past and Future," together with Lamb's "New Year's Eve," makes the matter clear. In both essays we find the writers confessing that they find it more pleasant to dwell upon the past than upon the future, and that the pleasures of memory are more grateful to them than those of anticipation. The likeness in this respect between the two essays is indeed rather singular, and it is curious that it has not before been pointed out. That Hazlitt was alluding to Lamb's "New year's Eve" is evident from the phrase "young master" which he puts between quotation marks, and which is found in Lamb's essay. It is, of course, unlikely that there was any good ground for Hazlitt's suspicion of plagiarism on the part of his friend. The idea in question was at least as likely to occur to Lamb as to Hazlitt. Nothing is more probable than that it was

SIDELIGHTS ON

the outcome of an exchange of confidences in conversation, so that neither could claim an exclusive property in the idea. Moreover, it is in the treatment of an idea rather than in the idea itself that the merit of an essay usually consists. Original ideas are hard to find, and when found are likely enough to prove merely paradoxes ; but it is comparatively easy to treat an old thought in an original manner. Possibly Lamb was occasionally indebted to Hazlitt for an idea, but if so it is certain that Hazlitt must have been quite as often indebted to Lamb. Hazlitt in fact practically confesses as much in the essay in which he describes so finely the company and the talk at Lamb's evening gatherings. But he was not exempt from one of the commonest of failings amongst authors who are, like actors, notoriously a jealous tribe, and as tenacious of their property in an idea as a country squire is of the game on his estate. It may be thought that I am attributing too great an effect to a trifling cause ; but if P. G. Patmore's account of Hazlitt in " My Friends and Acquaintances " is not a grossly overcharged caricature of him, the cause was quite sufficient to pro-

CHARLES LAMB

duce the effect I have attributed to it. There may have been other contributory causes ; but this, I think, was probably the leading one.

I said, in a former chapter, that all previous investigators of the contents of the *London Magazine* seemed to have contented themselves with ascribing to Lamb such articles only as appeared to be his by evidence that appeared upon the surface. This statement, however, requires to be a little qualified. It is well known that a second series of the Elia essays was published in Philadelphia in 1828—five years before the publication of the English edition. This, being an unauthorised collection, was of course made up according to the fancy of the compiler. Though it professed to contain only essays which had appeared in the *London Magazine*, it did in fact include articles from other sources, namely, some from Hunt's "Reflector," and one piece ("On the Melancholy of Tailors") from the "Champion." * Besides these the editor ven-

* These pieces, however, were probably not taken from the original sources, but from the edition of Lamb's "Works" published in 1818.

tured to ascribe to Lamb three pieces in the *London Magazine*, which were certainly not his. These are as follows : "The Nuns and Ale of Caverswell," "Twelfth Night, or What you will," and "Valentine's Day." For the inclusion of the first piece the editor had little or no excuse, since it is not at all in Lamb's style, and was in fact written by Allan Cunningham. There was more excuse for the inclusion of the others, which have certainly some resemblance, if only a superficial one, to Lamb's style. They were, as Canon Ainger has pointed out,* written by B. W. Procter, whom I have already mentioned as one of Lamb's imitators in thought and style. Seeing that Lamb had already dealt with the subject of "Valentine's Day," it seems curious that Procter should have had the courage to venture upon it after him ; and more curious that Lamb's American editor did not see how inferior the copy was to the original.†

* See *Athenæum*, June 7, 1890.

† There is, I believe, no doubt that Procter was the author of "Valentine's Day" ; yet there is a passage in it, which, if taken as a statement of fact, would seem to show that it cannot be his. In the course of the essay the writer says : "I am a little out of the

CHARLES LAMB

In "Twelfth Night," Procter made his nearest approach to a successful imitation of Lamb's style. It was evidently suggested by Elia's "All Fools' Day." It contains two or three passages which are, I think, of sufficient interest to justify their quotation. "I can almost imagine," says the author, "a contributor's circle, potent as a magician's" :

Shall I try to show our Elia's glancing wit ? Shall I trace the deep and fine vein of Mr. Table Talk ? Shall I paint the cheerful gravity (almost a paradox) of D——? the restless pleasantry of Janus, ever-veering, catching the sun and the shade ? Shall I strive to out-do Mr. Herbert, in his humour, in his portraits so piquant and so true ? Or shall I sharpen my pen's point, and hit off our friend Lycus's waggery, his puns, and (what is much better than either) his poetry ? Or paint our good A——, always gay ; like a huge forest transplanted, a *rus in urbe*,—musical as Polypheme, and as great ? Shall I go on ? Ah ! no. For who can tell of our doings ? Who can paint a laugh ? Who can carry away a rich thought habit of writing Valentines (thirty years in a warm climate make a difference in a man nowadays)." Procter had certainly not passed "thirty years in a warm climate" ; but the passage was probably introduced to conceal the authorship of the essay.

SIDELIGHTS ON

with all its bloom ? Where is the freshness of the jest that hung upon accident or circumstance ? It may not be done.

It is hardly necessary to repeat here what I have said in a former page as to the identities of the various contributors to the *London Magazine* who are here alluded to. "Lycus" is, of course, Thomas Hood, and "D——" De Quincey, or perhaps George Darley ; while "A——," I believe, stands for Allan Cunningham.

The following is the final and most interesting passage of "Twelfth Night" :

But of all the feasts and gay doings which I have known, none were like that *one* "Twelfth Night" which I passed at L——'s house some five or six years ago. That *was* a night ! O Jupiter ! O Bacchus ! There was *too much* mirth. The muscles were stretched and strained by laughing. Our host was a right merry man—a man of humour, of good nature, of high animal spirits, fantastic. He could make "the table" ring and roar beyond any one I ever knew. His jokes would not bear a strict glance, sometimes ; but they were better than wit, which is too serious. Wit sets one thinking, but L—— did not do this. He laughed ; he talked ; he told good stories ; he

CHARLES LAMB

mimicked friend and foe (good naturedly) ; he spoke burlesque in verse ; he misplaced epithets ; he reconciled contradictions ; he tacked extremities to each other—the grave and the gay,—sense and nonsense. He had drawn “the king,” and was as absolute as a Fate. He ordered things impossible. He insisted that black was white, and he insisted that others should think so too. Oh! there was no withstanding him, he was so pleasant a potentate : he said something—nothing—and looked round for the boisterous homage of his neighbours, and received it smiling and content.

That night we had songs, English and Italian ; we had mistletoe (there were ladies under it)—we had coffee and wines, and Twelfth Night characters. We had a supper where joke and hospitality reigned. And there were cold meats, and salads, and pies, and jellies, and wines of all colours, mocking with their lustre the topaz and the ruby, and there were pyramids of fruit, and mountains of rich cake, all decked with sprigs of holly and laurel. And we had a huge “wassail bowl” :—One ? We had a dozen, brimming and steaming, and scented with cloves and cinnamon. We ate and we drank, and we shouted. One sang, and another spoke (like a parliament orator), and one gave

SIDELIGHTS ON

an extravagant toast ; and a fourth laughed out at nothing ; and one cried, from very pain, that he could "*laugh no more*," and instantly a fresh joke was started, and the sufferer screamed with delight, and almost rolled from his chair. The cup of mirth was brimming. It went round and round again, and every one had his fill. This was no meagre shadowy banquet,—no Barmecide feast,—no card-party coldly decorous (where you lose your money, and pay for the candles). It was a revel and a jollity. Though our mirth was becoming, it raged and was loud like thunder. It lasted from nine o'clock at night till early breakfast (eight o'clock) in the morning, and it still lives in my recollection as the brightest day (or night) of the calendar.

Is this a description of a convivial evening at Charles Lamb's ? If so it is surely a good deal overcoloured—or else it represents a very exceptional occurrence. The extravagant mirth of the party and the costliness of the entertainment are not such as we usually associate with Lamb ; though the character of the host, allowing for some strokes of exaggeration, fits him well enough. There is a passage in Procter's "*Recollections of Men of Letters*" ("*Bryan Waller Procter*,"

CHARLES LAMB

1877), which seems to show that it was at Leigh Hunt's, and not at Lamb's, that the gathering took place. But the incident fits in no better with what we know of Hunt than it does with Lamb. However, it seems likely that the following passage describes the event which Procter had in his mind :

Hunt never gave dinners, but his suppers of cold meat and salad were cheerful and pleasant; sometimes the cheerfulness (after a "was-sail bowl") soared into noisy merriment. I remember one Christmas or New Year's evening, when we sat there till two or three o'clock in the morning, and when the jokes and stories and imitations so overcame me that I was nearly falling off my chair with laughter. This was mainly owing to the comic imitations of Coulson, who was usually so grave a man. We used to refer to him as to an encyclopædia, so perpetually indeed that Hunt always spoke of him as "The Admirable Coulson." The *vis comica* left him for the most part in later life, when he became a distinguished lawyer.

In the ninth volume of the *London Magazine* there is, at page 257, a short story entitled "The Bride of Modern Italy." It

SIDELIGHTS ON

is a tale of a young lady who is always passionately in love with her temporary *inamorato*, but is always ready to exchange him for a new flame. She is in fact in love with love, and not with any particular lover. The story bears the following motto :

My heart is fixt :

This is the sixt.

Elia.

As this couplet is not to be found in the known writings of Charles Lamb, the presumption is that the author submitted the story to him in manuscript, and that the lines were written on purpose for the occasion.

I have found a good many more interesting things of various kinds in the pages of the *London Magazine*; but as they do not come within the scope of my present subject, I shall not now dwell upon them. However, I will, in conclusion, mention one other rather remarkable discovery which I have made in the course of my examination of the magazine's contents. I have found in it a very considerable quantity of prose and verse of Thomas Hood's which has never

CHARLES LAMB

before been ascribed to him. These pieces I hope soon to find an opportunity of making known to readers of the present day—for notwithstanding the too great bulk of the already collected writings of the poet and humourist, I believe that the articles I have found are well worth reprinting. One of them I will print here—for I do not doubt that my readers will be pleased to make its acquaintance:

ODE TO MASTER IZAAK WALTON

Oh pleasant Old Master Walton !—
The white and sweet Lea river,
That runneth through meads,
And 'tween flagged reeds,
Babbleth of thee for ever !

God rest thee, ah, Gentle Izaak !
Thou hast cast good lines in the Lea, to
Entrap silly fish ;
And 'tis now my wish
To throw these lines to thee too.

I have oft tried to be a fisher ;
And still for the angle sigh now—
But my rod is in pickle,
My lines are fickle ;
And my *hook* is all my *eye* now !

SIDELIGHTS ON

I have taken thy work to the water,
And long angled *per* Piscator :
But to fish by the book,
In the fishiest brook,
I find is against my *natur* !

The Angler is like the poet,—
That is, he—*nascitur non fit* !
My fish has no mouth,
For the wind of the South,
And I find 'mid my maggots not one fit.

I walk with a *reel* like a drunkard :
And toil in my troutless rambles :
Oh, my *gut* wears out
Long before the trout,
And my flies make friends with the brambles.

Oh teach me, sweet Master Walton,—
Teach lovers of thine who wish well !
To chuck the chin
Of the chubb, within
His deeps:—and in shallows to fish well.

I never caught more than one pike,
And that was the longest of fishes;
But a serjeant, whose eye
It caught passing by—
Said 'twas one of the third Militia's !

God rest thee—oh sweetest Izaak !
Thou wert the best of the Angle ;
All the river fair,
From Lea-bridge to Ware
Thou didst love to disentangle.

CHARLES LAMB

Oh thou wert an honest pilgrim,
And naught could be sweeter or calmer,—
Than gently to look
Up the gadding brook,
On the Pilgrim with his *brown Palmer* !*

Thy Soul was a gentle creature—
And always prepared to die was ;
And when her bright
Wing took its flight,
It no *artificial fly* was !

But the worms, I fear me, hail'd thee ;
And to catch thee 'twas their desire once :—
“ Come nibble away,
Brother brandlings gay,
For he lined our bellies with wire once ! ”

Yet enough !—Thy book must content me,
For skill will not come with the wishing ;
So I'll take to thy lines,
As the summer shines,—
And so, go a-fancy-fishing.

Farewell, good Master Walton !
May Madge sing her verses near thee !
And Lea as it speeds
Through the merry meads,
With its watery voice endear thee !

I do not think that any one who has even
a slight acquaintance with the writings of

* Master Izaak was not mighty in *fly-fishing*. In this
branch of the art he was *worsted* by *Cotton*.

SIDELIGHTS ON

Thomas Hood will doubt that these verses must have proceeded from his pen. They have all the characteristics of his style—his metrical facility, his never-failing wealth of odd conceits and images, and, above all, that power of so using the pun as to make it, not a ghastly infliction on the reader's patience, as it is in the works of most writers who affect it, but a legitimately humorous device. Let those who want further demonstration refer to one of Hood's undoubted poems, entitled "The Angler's Farewell," and I think they will require no further evidence. Perhaps it was because the poem I have just mentioned is very much on the same lines as the "Ode" that the author did not care to republish the latter ; but I am sure that the reader will agree with me that no such reason should stand in the way of the reproduction of the ingenious and characteristic piece now reprinted.

VI

MORE ABOUT WAINEWRIGHT AND
LAMB.

I have in the first chapter of this book given some details about Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, and some account of his connection with Lamb. I have since learned a good many particulars about him that were unknown to me when I first wrote about that man of many aliases. He was, it seems a much more industrious writer, and a much larger contributor to the periodical literature of the time, than has been hitherto supposed. Moreover, he was the author of at least one separate publication. One of his pseudonyms in the *London Magazine*, as we have seen, was that of "Egomet Bonmot." I was aware that a book or booklet was in existence which purported to be the work of this same, "Egomet Bonmot"; but it is so rare that for a long time I searched for it in vain. Yet,

SIDELIGHTS ON

curiously enough, I had all the while a copy in my possession, which I fortunately came upon one day when I was looking for something else. It is so curious a production, and so characteristic of its author, that I think the reader will readily forgive me for dwelling upon it at some length. Its title is as follows : “ ‘ Some Passages ’ in the Life, &c., of Egomet Bonmot, Esq. Edited by Mr. Mwaughmaim, and now first published by Me. London : James Bigg. . . . 1825.”

“ Mr. Mwaughmaim,” it is pretty evident, is the French “ *Moi-même* ” or “ *myself*.” On the fly-leaf opposite the title-page there are two mottoes, which profess to be taken from an “ *Old Play (written yesterday)*.” In these the author gives us some hints as to the design of his work. He says :—

—What’s here ? Myself and I ?—I and myself ?—

He talks of little but himself—I’ faith
I see it now ; a right broad target this
For ridicule : my life upon’t he’ll hit
The very spot sans aim,—for in these days
That Butt is all Bull’s-eye.

* * * *

CHARLES LAMB

What ! demand

An author's meaning in the book he writes ?—
May he not quiz the *Egos* of his day
And shew how they are born, without the bore
Of writing down the text of his discourse ?

It would seem from these passages that the author wished his readers to look upon his work as a satire upon egotism. It is, however, if a satire at all, a very mild one; and as it relates chiefly to the author himself it is not to be wondered at that it sometimes seems to resolve itself into a panegyric. Few authors are gifted with an inconvenient amount of modesty—and certainly Wainewright was not one of the few. That egotism was the dominant note of his individuality can hardly be doubted; yet his vanity differed a good deal in its manifestations from the ordinary exhibitions of that quality. It does not appear that it ever displayed itself offensively or intrusively in his private life: at all events, none of those who were personally acquainted with him have noted that it did. He seems, indeed, to have been a very pleasant companion, adapting himself easily and unassumingly to those with whom he came into contact. Nor was

SIDELIGHTS ON

his vanity as an author of the usual kind. In no case did he put his own name to his writings, and he used so many *aliases* that it seemed as though he was anxious to conceal all traces of his literary labours. A love of singularity, as he himself tells us, seems to have been one of the leading motives of his actions. Taking him altogether, his character seems to have been quite unique in its union of diverse and apparently incompatible qualities.

The "Egomet Bonmot" booklet has an introduction which gives an account of the supposed author and of his life and death. In this we have, under a slight veil of fiction, Wainewright's estimate of himself and of his literary productions. Of course it is not to be taken literally, nor without making allowance for the writer's natural desire to magnify his achievements. The following quotations comprise the most significant passages in the introduction:—

My late friend, Mr. Egomet Bonmot, was a gentleman of considerable attainments—he had, besides, humour, sentiment, cleverness, and an original turn of thinking, which made him an agreeable companion. In his boyish days he

CHARLES LAMB

had a knack of rhyming, which made him a sort of idol among his friends in the town where he was born, many miles from the metropolis. This, however, did not render him more vain than the occasion warranted ; for though at no period of his life was he, properly speaking, a modest man, yet through many of his early years he was not obviously otherwise. And, indeed, after he came to London, a series of disappointments in his hopes of literary eminence—hopes which I think his talents might fairly allow him to indulge—was unable to disturb a certain equanimity which then distinguished him, but which was, in fact, rather the proud silence of self-approval than the humbleness of unrepining patience. At length, however, the success which attended some not very meritorious efforts of more noisy self-importance entirely changed his outward bearing ; and, for the first time during a close intimacy of five-and-twenty years, I heard him loudly decry the adequacy of critics to pass judgment upon his works. He grew boisterous in his own praises, and began, oddly enough, to vaunt himself upon his descent from an illustrious ancestry. . . . From the birth of this new feeling he was another man : —he resolved thenceforth to adopt the invincible spirit of bounce, and the success which followed this determination appeared amply to

justify his now declared opinion that modesty and humility were at best but starving qualities. He thought fit to announce his intention openly, apprising the world under his sign-manual that such a "chiel" was "amang them"; and a hundred works which he afterwards published (*anonymously then*, in order that he might take his full swing), raised their unknown, but not unsuspected, author to the zenith of triumphant popularity. He criticised them himself in the various Magazines, Literary Journals, Newspapers, &c., and they had all the claims to distinction which belong to real merit, superadded to that far surer and more requisite one of being self-eulogised and most diligently and ingeniously bepuffed. His works, I say, were now as much sought for as they had before been neglected, and his authorly popularity rather gained than lost by its being the "found treasure" of a man who chose to possess it *per se*, without printing his name in his title-pages. Literary distinction, however, when at last obtained, after the varied struggles of years, falls upon battered and blunted feelings; the romantic yearnings of youth are sobered down into mere matter of fact; the morn of life no longer glitters in the Orient sun: the world has laid its paralysing paw upon the acuteness of our sentiments; an analysing spirit creeps over us; experience

CHARLES LAMB

unconsciously incites us to dissect things that in former years we simply used to worship for their exterior beauty; the wine of life is drawn and nothing but the lees remain; an icy hand is laid upon us, and the genial current of the soul is frozen; many friends, too, to whose hearts our success would have been a cordial, and in the light of whose countenance we had hoped to see the splendour of our literary distinction delightfully reflected, are lost—hid perhaps in the grave; in short, when a man arrives at thirty, there is a crowd of bitters behind him and about him; and the field for delightful hope to disport in is dwindled to a mere span before him. Thus it was with Bonmot—his success was a sort of bitter-sweet—and thenceforward the last ingredient was well-nigh overcome by the former, which largely mingled itself in the effusions of his pen. Well! no matter—he is now gone to his account—and I may say, like Antony, my heart is “there with Cæsar.” I was his bosom friend—to me therefore he was known *intus et in cute*. I was with him to the last, and never surely was there an occasion in which my unparalleled powers of stenography could be so adequately exercised, as in preserving to mankind his dying words. . . . Like Socrates, he desired that his latest moments should be spent in instruction; and he determined to make “a swan-

like end " by delivering what he had to say in rhyme. It is not perhaps material to give my friend's last words an accurate designation. A "dying speech" smacks overmuch of the New-Drop—Instructions they hardly were: therefore to save further cudgelling of brains, and at the same time to be in fashion, let me call them *Confessions*—Confessions of an Egotist if you please—Confessions are all the go, and Confessions these certainly were, for they let out many things respecting his feelings and his motives, of which before no one had any conception, except *himself* and his other *self*, namely, *myself*, who had all along known what his Confessions showed—that it was the world's disregard which first drove him to centre all in self:—an intimate conviction to which probably might be traced similar endeavours made (*haud passibus æquis*) by others of the confraternity of egotists who lift up their heads in these days. I say *confraternity*, though, commonly, egotism nowadays has its origin different from Bonmot's—in the want of staple commodity. He "had no brother, was like no brother"—yes—fairly speaking, Bonmot was without a rival. Like my stenography, "none but himself could be his parallel."

Perhaps it will be as well to say here that

CHARLES LAMB

it is not possible to reconcile some of the statements which Wainewright makes when writing in the character of Bonmot, with others which he makes when writing over different signatures. Thus the reader will remember that in the "Janus Weathercock" article from which I quoted so largely in the first chapter, the writer states that he had never "*authorised* a line" before he was invited by Scott to contribute to the *London Magazine*, whereas in these "Confessions" he tells an altogether different story. It would be easy to argue from this and other discrepancies that Janus Weathercock and Egomet Bonmot were two different personages. I do not think, however, that there can be any reasonable doubt that they were one and the same. The discrepant statements were probably intentionally made with a view of preventing the reader from discovering the real author behind the masks with which he chose to disguise himself.

The "Confessions" begin with some lines which, if rather hackneyed in idea, are not devoid of poetical feeling, and which exhibit considerable skill in versification.

SIDELIGHTS ON

Few years are past—ah, blissful was the
time,—
When half my earthly happiness was rhyme ;—
When Hope's fond whispers through my youth-
ful lays
Were like the rustlings of eternal bays ;—
When for each thought that rose with some-
thing in it
A rhyme was fetched from Twick'nam in a
minute ;—
When youth with truth ; with leisure pleasure
blended,
And every sorrow with to-morrow ended.

Thrice happy days—o'er whose delightful
hours
Boon Nature strewed her fairest freshest
flowers—
Farewell—farewell—oh, take this heart's fare-
well
While yet it may on your dear moments
dwell—
Still let me bend a lingering look on you,
Bask in the memory of each sunny hue,
And thus waft back through years a long, a
last adieu !—
Oh, if big words were made for thoughts like
mine,
Here the fond muse might swell the pompous
line,

CHARLES LAMB

Here pour her strains on deeds of other days,
The thousand joys, the vanished dreams of
 praise,
The rushing memories of times gone by—
The inspiring hopes, the young heart's flattery—
—But hold—what pomp of words—what poet's
 song
Speaks like the sigh which struggles with the
 tongue,
When fond remembrance of departed years
Melts all our little eloquence to tears !

The author then proceeds to tell the story of his youth, which included a great deal of rhyming and a disappointment in love. The latter event caused him to write a satire on the female sex, which, however, when published, did not sell. Its ill success had such an effect upon him that his power of composition was lost, and his discouragement even led him to destroy all his manuscripts.

—At length, with sudden hope to make amends
And soothe the Aonian vixens into friends,
Behold a hecatomb in flame ascends !—
Odes, Prologues, Songs, Lines on the Ace of
 Spades,
Jokes, Sacred Strains for Music, pert Charades,
Anacreontics, Hymns, Stanzas on Peace,

SIDELIGHTS ON

Epigrams, Elegies, Appeals to Greece,
War Echoes, Woodland Dreams, the Muse's
Herse,
Address to Milton's Shade, Cassandra's Curse,
Pierian Anecdotes, Thalia's Fall,
Broad-Grins Travestied—and above them all,
Sonnets, by which I fed the hopes of dinners,
Were to the flames consigned like other
sinners.

That Wainewright did indeed write much
verse in his youth, and that, recognising its
inferior quality, he consigned most of it to
the flames may, I think, be accepted as facts.
"Broad-Grins Travestied" appears, however,
to have escaped destruction—in part at
least—as we shall see later on.

Inspired with new hopes he next resolved
to try his luck in Tragedy :—

I wrote a play—it failed—in short 'twas
damned.

Here was a glass of bitters !—yet 'twas very
Good — thick — substantial—so I grew quite
merry.—

Merry ? aye, merry—if you smile at that
My answer is—you know not what is what.—
There *is* a horrid laugh—a ghastly grin
Which brings no ray of sunlight from within—

CHARLES LAMB

A heartless glee—a desperate merriness
Masking the utter wreck of happiness,
Which many a wretch indulges in his pride,
Fancying that laughter loud his silent pangs
can hide.

His misfortunes, he now thought, entitled
him to consider himself as

One
Inexpiably sinned against—but why
Or wherefore—right or wrongfully,
No matter—'twas an opportunity
That tutor'd me how, like a real poet,
Not only to be sulky, but to show it.

Whereupon he followed Lord Byron's example, and

Roaming all the astonished world about
I turned my heart and bowels inside out.

To this passage is appended a note, in which, after remarking that this kind of display, though possibly excusable in Lord Byron himself, was not to be endured in his imitators, he adds: "An acquaintance of Bonmot's said, comically enough, that such writers were like men intent upon displaying what Nature wisely keeps out of sight—*bowels*, for instance." I think that the

SIDELIGHTS ON

acquaintance who said this was very probably Charles Lamb. I believe he makes somewhere, in one of his letters, a very similar remark.

The last passage I have quoted leads up to a clever and spirited attack on the Byronic school of poetry, of which the writer for a time avowed himself a disciple. Presently, however, he grew weary of such affectation, and became a contributor to the better sort of magazines. He adopted a plan experience had taught him—

To put humilities upon the shelf
And preach good round opinions of *Myself*.

He boasts that—

'Twas *I Myself* reared *Blackwood* into fame—

and the other magazines of the time were equally indebted to him.

I say for things with or without *My* name
Chastising *Baldwin* owed me half his fame :
Yes, clumsy Northouse and the *Monthly (New)*
(His of the single gem !) owed me a few
Of the most popular of all their hits—
In short *I* furnished *all* their tittest-bits.—

CHARLES LAMB

Whate'er I wrote was eagerly gulped down,
I-by-self-I was sure to please the town—
I was the genius,—I the mighty spell,
'Twas I alone that made the pages *tell*—
All those *Confessions* which transmogrify
The pensive public to a priest, were *I*—
The *Opium Eater*—who was he but I?
And who the nervous *Hypochondriac*? I—
The *Gamester*, *Gull*, and *Cantab*?—I—I—I!—
I am the vivifier, ne'er surpassed—
The life of *Blackwood's* life from first to last—
'Tis I alone who've found the northern wights
In *merum sal* for *Kit's Ambrosian Nights*—
'Tis I that figure in the examination
Touching the Southside youngsters' education—
Sir *Morgan's Carols* and the famed *Chaldee*
Derive their popularity from Me.
—The moment I left *Northouse* down he fell—
And for the *Monthly* many a page will tell
The deeds I did for *it*, known by the test
Of all that's wisest, virtuosest, discreetest,
best.—

On the whole *Baldwin's London* was the best,
With more of sterling stuff than all the rest,
Though many a reader conning this and that,
Would cry *cui bono*? eh? what *are* you at? . . .
Yet still it kept alive as long as I
Transferred the stock of my vitality
To give its pages immortality—

SIDELIGHTS ON

But Baldwin when / left him ceased to thrive,
—He lost the honey-maker of his hive!

Blackwood has scholars in his motley group
Of smart contributors—but how they stoop!
Blackwood is out and out too light—too frisky—
And savours (stinks at times) of slang and
whisky.—

Let *Blackwood* quit mean scandal, and pursue
A cleanly course as gentlemen should do.—

And as for the—(no longer Baldwin's)—
London—

It runs a desperate chance of being undone.—
The Taylor who is now its lord and master
Will rue, too late to mend, that worst disaster
Of being thought that he's about to fail—
—A rise of charge betrays a dwindling sale.
What, is he blind, that he should thus be willing
To risk existence for another shilling?—
Let him, if he would see his coffers fill,
Out-bobadil Auld Reekie's Bobadil,
But larger price will never line his till.—

If double columns were resumed again ;
If o'er those double columns first-rate men
Poured forth their minds ; and puny cockney
scribblings
No more should vex one with their shallow
dribblings ;

CHARLES LAMB

If the too ominous supply of leads
(By which the self-same quantity o'erspreads
A larger surface) were at once discarded ;—
If no more vulgarisms were interlarded ;—
If what is meant for humour were not found
Pilfered from Joe the Miller,—and *re-ground* ;
If any way were hit upon to shun
A show of force as feeble as its fun ;
If there were something too of proper pride
That scorned to wince though rivals should
deride—

No baby trials at recrimination,
No knucklings-down of meagre imitation,—
If the ridiculous high price came down
Once more to the sufficient half-a-crown ;
Then Taylor's *London* yet might hope to live—
But in its present state I wouldn't give
Much for its chance :—the storm's already
brewing,
And three-and-sixpence soon will be its ruin—
'Twill die at length the victim of O. P.
And thus the end of this attempt will be
Still further triumph for " the Ebony."

Perhaps I have now quoted enough—the
reader may think more than enough—of
this singular production. The remaining
portion of it consists of Bonmot's instruc-
tions to Mr. Mwaughmmain as to the pos-

SIDELIGHTS ON

thumous publication of his various writings. Bonmot, we are told, died as he had lived, the last words he uttered being "I, I."

I have not made the above extracts from Bonmot's "Confessions" without an object. The booklet is so rare that the ordinary reader has no chance of procuring it—and hitherto none of those who have written about its author seem to have known of its existence. About Wainewright I confess that I feel much curiosity myself; and I assume, therefore, that my readers will not be uninterested in him. It is true that his verses are of only mediocre quality; but they at least help us towards a comprehension of the complex personality of their author. They also assist us to trace his contributions to the various periodicals of the time, and have besides some interest as showing us in what light a shrewd and capable observer looked upon the literary movements of the period.

A few notes are necessary to make some of the passages which I have quoted intelligible. Perhaps the allusions which will most puzzle readers of the present day are those to "chastising Baldwin" and "clumsy

CHARLES LAMB

Northouse." Baldwin, as we have seen, was the printer and one of the original proprietors of the *London Magazine*. But there was another *London Magazine*, which began its career, like Baldwin's, in January 1820, and which came to an end (I believe, but am not certain) in July 1821. This was printed and published at first by Northouse and Gold, and afterwards by Gold alone. Of course, the fact that the two magazines bore the same title was the cause of some confusion—to avoid which they used to be distinguished, the one as Baldwin's and the other as Northouse's or Gold's Magazine. Wainewright, as I believe, and as he tells us himself, was a contributor to Northouse's, as well as to Baldwin's *London Magazine*.

It will not be out of place to introduce here an allusion of Lamb's to Wainewright which appeared in the *London Magazine* at the end of his essay on "The Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis." This note has never been reprinted, I believe, in any edition of Lamb's works. It is as follows :—

N.B. I am glad to see *Janus* veering about to the old quarter. I feared he had been rust-bound.

SIDELIGHTS ON

C. being asked why he did not like Gold's *London* as well as ours—it was in poor S.'s time—replied—

—*Because there is no Weathercock,
And that's the reason why.*

I will take also the present opportunity of introducing a curious allusion of Wainwright's to Lamb, which has not hitherto been noticed. It occurs in the course of one of his contributions to the *London Magazine*, "The Delicate Intricacies." This is an amusing skit upon the school of novelists of which Ouida is the most distinguished modern representative: indeed, it is the most remarkable anticipative satire with which I am acquainted. It is really curious to note how cleverly Wainwright parodies the luxuriant descriptive style of the famous lady novelist. The passage relating to Lamb is as follows:—

The gas was now waning fast; so were the patrols and watchmen. With creaks, rumbles, *gee-whut's*, and the smell of matting, cabbages, &c., market-carts slowly progress to *The Garden!* from the delightful villages of Isleworth, Twickenham, and Turnham Green.

CHARLES LAMB

Several *noticeable* men with black silk stockings were returning from a high court-plenary of literature and French wines—one might see at a glance that they were famous in puns, poetry, philosophy, and exalted criticism. Briefly, they were the *wits* of London! One of them, "soaring aloft in the high region of his fancies, with his garlands and singing robes about him," chaunted, in the ringing emptiness of the streets, "*Diddle, diddle, dumpkins.*"

Is it necessary to say that the *noticeable* men or *wits** of London were the contributors to the *London Magazine* returning from one of the monthly dinners? or that the chaunter of "Diddle, diddle, dumpkins" was Charles Lamb? It would be a pity to leave so important a matter in doubt, and therefore I shall take some pains to settle it. That the men in black silk stockings, "famous in puns, poetry, philosophy, and exalted criticism," could have been no other than the contributors to the *London Magazine* is clear; for who else *could* they have been? That point being proved, we may reasonably con-

* We learn from a letter of Lamb's that John Clare used to refer to those whom he met at the *London Magazine* dinners or at Lamb's suppers as the *wits*.

SIDELIGHTS ON

clude that Charles Lamb would be amongst them. Still it may be argued that we have no evidence that he was the chaunter of "Diddle, diddle, dumpkins." But have we not? It is true that Lamb confessed he had no ear for music, and could hardly distinguish one tune from another. But here, as in so many other cases, I think it was his cue to exaggerate his deficiencies in order to heighten the effect of his humour. That he had little relish for classical music we can well believe; but that he could appreciate the more popular kinds, and that he had a great admiration for fine singing, can hardly be denied. He says of Braham, in one of his letters to Manning—

Do you like Braham's singing? The little Jew has bewitched me. I follow him like as the boys followed Tom the Piper. He cures me of melancholy as David cured Saul; but I don't throw stones at him as Saul did at David in payment. I was insensible to music till he gave me a new sense. . . . Braham's singing, when it is impassioned, is finer than Mrs. Siddons's or Mr. Kemble's acting! and when it is not impassioned it is as good as hearing a person of fine sense talking. The brave little Jew!

CHARLES LAMB

Other passages from his letters might be quoted to show that Lamb was by no means so insensible to the pleasures of music as he has represented himself to be in his "Chapter on Ears." But was he himself a singer? Of course it cannot be claimed for him that he was, in any technical sense of the term, a singer; but that he did on occasion chaunt a ditty, or, at least, fragments of a ditty amongst his friends, seems to be sufficiently proved. I shall presently introduce to the reader's notice an article from a magazine of the time in which Lamb is represented as singing a song for the entertainment of his companions. This may be a mere effort of imagination on the writer's part, and therefore I do not lay too much stress upon that point of evidence. But, as the reader will remember, we have already learned from Thomas Hood that Lamb was capable on occasions of indulging in a chaunt, if only for the purpose of suppressing the outpourings of a bore. We have, however, still better evidence than this. Most of my readers, I suppose, are acquainted with Haydon's account of the party at which Lamb behaved so disrespectfully to the comptroller

SIDELIGHTS ON

of stamps ; but I must quote a portion of the story in order to make my argument clear. The comptroller, it will be remembered, asked Wordsworth whether he did not think Milton a great genius—an enquiry which caused Lamb to tell him that he was a silly fellow. Haydon then proceeds :

After an awful pause the comptroller said, "Don't you think Newton a great genius?" I could not stand it any longer. Keats put his head into my books, Ritchie squeezed in a laugh, Wordsworth seemed asking himself "Who is this?" Lamb got up, and, taking a candle, said, "Sir, will you allow me to look at your phrenological development?" He then turned his back on the poor man, and at every question of the comptroller he chaunted—

"Diddle, diddle, dumpling, my son John
Went to bed with his breeches on."

The man in office, finding Wordsworth did not know who he was, said in a spasmodic and half-chuckling anticipation of assured victory, "I have had the honour of some correspondence with you, Mr. Wordsworth." "With me, sir?" said Wordsworth, "not that I remember." "Don't you, sir? I am a comptroller of stamps." There was a dead silence ;—the

CHARLES LAMB

comptroller evidently thinking that was enough. While we were waiting for Wordsworth's reply. Lamb sung out :—

“ Hey diddle diddle,
The cat and the fiddle ! ”

“ My dear Charles ! ” said Wordsworth,—

“ Diddle, diddle, dumpling, my son John,”

chaunted Lamb, and then rising, exclaimed, “ Do let me have another look at that gentleman's organs.” Keats and I hurried Lamb into the painting-room, shut the door, and gave way to inextinguishable laughter. Monkhouse followed, and tried to get Lamb away. We went back, but the comptroller was irreconcilable. We soothed and smiled and asked him to supper. He stayed, though his dignity was sorely affected.

Good stories—or rather some good stories—may be told too often, but that, I think, is hardly the case with the above ; and, therefore, I shall not apologise for once more repeating it.

Let me return to less debatable matters, and resume my notes on Bonmot's “ Confessions.” These are, as I have said, chiefly

SIDELIGHTS ON

valuable because of their biographical and literary interest. How far then can we rely upon them as statements of fact, and not mere exercises of fancy? It is evident that the author wrote purposely in such a manner as to make it difficult for the reader to discern whether he was writing in jest or in earnest. It is necessary, therefore, to be cautious in drawing conclusions from his statements, but I believe we have in the picture of Bonmot a true and striking delineation of Wainewright's character on its better side, done with a degree of self-knowledge and detachment which was hardly to be expected from him. If vanity consists in an inordinate estimate of one's merits and in blindness to one's defects, then vanity was hardly the dominant feature in Wainewright's personality. If, however, we distinguish vanity from egotism, and define the latter as consisting in a continual pre-occupation with a man's self, and an almost complete inability to think of other persons or things except as they relate to himself, then I think we may describe Wainewright as a thorough egotist. A vain man, in this sense, is one who is vain even of his

CHARLES LAMB

failings, while an egotist may be acutely conscious of his own deficiencies. One of the Weathercock articles in the *London Magazine* begins as follows :

This will be, in all probability, a short article. For, as I am now sitting in a churchyard seventy-three miles from London, without a single book either in my pocket or portman-teau, I must put my trust for fine phrases in my memory, which is not to be relied on—and in my brains, which are little copious.

The confession which the author makes here is, I think, one which a merely vain person would never have made. If I read Wainwright's character aright, it was a sense of the shortcomings of his literary productions which hindered him from acknowledging them. He had, in fact, a keen appreciation of literary excellence as displayed in the works of the old poets and in his great contemporaries, and he could not help perceiving how inferior his own writings were in comparison with theirs. He practically owns this in the "Confessions ;" and since he had set his heart upon the attainment of fame as an author, the knowledge, it cannot be doubted,

SIDELIGHTS ON

was the source of much vexation to him. He was thus led to seek, by a display of singularity and assurance, a notoriety which he felt he could not otherwise obtain. He gained his object to some extent, but he did not deceive himself into thinking that his periodical essays, clever as they undoubtedly were, had in them the elements of enduring worth.

In the passage already quoted, of which the following lines are a part—

All those Confessions which transmogrify
The pensive public to a priest, were I—
The *Opium Eater*—who was he but I?
And who the nervous *Hypochondriac*?—I—
The *Gamester*, *Gull*, and *Cantab*?—I—I—I!—

'Tis I that figure in the examination
Touching the Southside youngsters' education,
the writer, I believe, contrives, under cover
of a general satire on egotism, to allude to
some of his own contributions to the various
magazines of the time. Would any one but
the author of "The Memoir of a Hypo-
chondriac" himself—which, as the reader
will remember, I ascribed to Wainewright
before I had seen the Bonmot booklet—

CHARLES LAMB

have coupled it with the "Opium-Eater"? De Quincey's work had, in 1825, run through many editions, and was already a classic; the "Hypochondriac" had been read only by the subscribers to the *London Magazine*, and had been forgotten, we may be sure, by most of them. The case seems at first sight even stronger with regard to

the examination

Touching the Southside youngsters' education.

This refers to a dramatic scene, entitled, "Examination of the School of Southside by Mr. W. W.," which appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* for December 1824. I suppose the object of ascribing it to "Mr. W. W." was to suggest that it was written by Wordsworth, which it obviously was not, nor can I see that it was ever intended as a burlesque upon his style. It is difficult, indeed, to understand why Wainwright should allude to so obscure an article unless he was its author. It is not even a piece in which the egotism that Bonmot satirises is at all pronounced. But the fact that it refers to a matter of merely local interest, and that "the Tickler"—one of the

leading contributors to *Blackwood*—is its hero, seem to show that Wainewright could hardly have written it. As to "The Gamester," "Gull," and "Cantab"—I have not been able to trace any essays in which the first two appear; but I have found in *Blackwood*, two chapters of "The Confessions of a Cantab,"—and this, I suppose, is what Wainewright alludes to. If he was ever a student at Cambridge, these "Confessions" may very well have been written by him; but I do not find in them any certain indications of his authorship. To sum up the matter, it would seem that while we may rely upon the Bonmot "Confessions" as giving a faithful general view of Wainewright in his literary character, we can hardly trust to any particular statement in them. It almost seems as if he must have taken pleasure in mystifying his readers and leading them astray.

In the "Confessions," Wainewright appears to claim that he was a contributor both to Baldwin's and Northouse's *London Magazines*, to the *New Monthly Magazine*, and to *Blackwood*. It is certain that he contributed to the first mentioned; and I think I can show

CHARLES LAMB

that he also contributed to *Northouse's Magazine*. Whether he was a contributor to the *New Monthly Magazine* I do not know ; but I scarcely think he was. As to *Blackwood* I think his hand may be traced in certain contributions which bear the signature of "Blaise Fitztravesty." Most of these consist of parodies or imitations of the poets of the time.* It may be that I am mistaken in ascribing these papers to Wainewright, but they are, I think, the only ones in *Blackwood* of which he could have been the author. Apart from the Bonmot "Confessions," it appears to

* For the information of those who may be disposed to look up these articles I add a list of them : "A Midsummer Night's Dream," in blank verse, by Blaize Fitztravesty, Esq. (December 1821); "Another Ladleful from the Devil's Punch Bowl" (February 1822); "First Notes of an incipient Ballad-Metre-Monger" (July 1822); "Nuptials in Jeopardy" (December 1822); "Nuptials out of Jeopardy" (January 1823.)

I also attribute to Wainewright, though not very positively, two other articles : "The Confessions of an English Glutton" (January 1823); "The Confessions of a Cantab" (October and November 1824).

Neither of the last two items has any distinguishing signature affixed to it. If "The Confessions of an English Glutton" is Wainewright's it is one of his best efforts. The author, in writing it, evidently had in his mind Lamb's "Edax on Appetite," his "Dis-

be certain that he did contribute some papers to "The Ebony," as he calls it.

It is in Northouse's *London Magazine* that I have found the most curious of Wainewright's writings—or at least the most curious after the Weathercock articles. These are a series of papers which bear the signatures of "Sam. Quiz" and "Paul Clutterbuck." Let me say at once that though I believe these papers to be Wainewright's I do not contend that they are certainly his. They are very much in his manner, yet not so much so as to put the matter beyond doubt. However, to save circumlocution, I will speak of them henceforth as though there were no question as to his authorship of them. It would indeed be a question of little importance whether he was or was not their author, save for one of them which I shall presently reproduce.

I give below a list of the papers in *Northouse's Magazine* which I attribute to Waine-

sation upon Roast Pig," and his "Confessions of a Drunkard," and set himself to imitate or emulate those articles. His picture of the evil effects of gluttony is a very powerful one, and is not unworthy of being compared with Lamb's delineation of the miseries of the drunkard.

CHARLES LAMB

wright.* The "Sam. Quiz" articles consist of a series of imitations of the leading authors of the time, including Wordsworth, Coleridge, Leigh Hunt, Barry Cornwall, George Colman, Crabbe, and others. Though these are not without cleverness, they are not very successful as parodies of their originals. To attempt to parody Coleridge's "Christabel" is to court certain failure. Of the many who have attempted it none has succeeded—and, it may be confidently predicted, none who attempt it ever will succeed. Nor does "Sam.

* "Immortality in Embryo," by Samuel Quiz. Three articles. (vol. ii., pp. 39, 151, and 365); "A Day at the Mill," by Samuel Quiz. (vol. ii., p. 271); "Prodigious Success of the Déjeuné," by Paul Clutterbuck. (vol. iii., p. 52); "The Literary Ovation; or, the Row in an Uproar," by Paul Clutterbuck, Esq. (vol. iii., p. 240); "The Winter Evening's Fire-side; or Chit-chat and Whisky-toddy with our Contributors" (vol. iii., p. 154).

As regards the last item it is apparently the work of two or three hands, one of whom was "Paul Clutterbuck" or Wainewright. It should be explained also with regard to the "Prodigious success of the Déjeuné" that it refers to a periodical of the time, of which Wainewright (supposing him to be "Paul Clutterbuck") was the editor.

Besides the articles already mentioned there is one entitled "Country Sketches," on p. 65 of vol. iv., which may have been written by Wainewright.

Quiz" come nearer to success in his imitations of Wordsworth, Barry Cornwall, or Crabbe. With George Colman, however,—a much easier model—he is more successful. The reader will remember that among the manuscripts which Bonmot says that he committed to the flames was "Broad Grins Travestied"; but I suspect that the imitations of Colman which are given in the "Sam. Quiz" papers, and in "The Winter-Evening's Fireside" were some of the "Travesties" which were saved from the flames.

I now come to the article which must excuse me if the reader has felt little interest in the foregoing account of a writer about whom he may not be curious. This is entitled "The Literary Ovation." I need hardly say that it is not reprinted here on account of its merits, but because of its references to Lamb and Hazlitt, and because of the curious glimpse which it affords us behind the scenes of the literary movements of the times.

CHARLES LAMB

THE LITERARY OVATION ;

OR,

THE ROW IN AN UPROAR

By PAUL CLUTTERBUCK, Esq.* late Member
of the Déjeuné Club.

* This account of the meeting in Paternoster Row was transmitted to our Office for perusal. It was accepted without hesitation, particularly as the writer, Paul Clutterbuck, affirms that he has every reason to credit the authenticity of the statement, which was given to him by a gentleman who was present at the Ovation.—Ed.

PROEM.

Those great men, Messieurs Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, resolved to give a dinner-party. Invitations sent out forthwith. Day fixed for the Jubilee ; conference between the publishers, whether, as it was a literary party, they should invite Paul Clutterbuck (me) or not —proposal negatived without a division, on the plea of his having taken their name in vain. Paul's contrite behaviour, his exceeding penitence, his outrageous desire to see Mister John Scott ; his opinion of that great man ; trusteth that he shall meet him at a jollification in the Temple ; anticipations thereof. He wondereth what Mr. John Scott is like, and straightway returneth to his subject. Divers literary characters invited to the dinner ; great novelty to many of them. Dinner commenced : Mr. Baldwin in the chair ; fills it as ably as his glass : glass circulates —thousand pities the Magazine does not circulate as well. Paul's great fears for that unhappy publication :

SIDELIGHTS ON

waxeth witty thereon ; slily compareth it to a goose : astonished at his own impudence. John Scott faceté, marvellous fact that ; Paul thinketh the great man's valour and wit are on a par, " par nobile fratrum," but feareth for the result of his audacity ; fancieth the great man's passion on reading this ; imageth him walking up and down his garret, " with a short uneasy motion," as Mister Coleridge somewhere observes. Compliments to Mr. John Scott's singular propriety and strict conformity to Christian principles. The ovation begins to be pleasant ; the lecturer groweth funny ; not particular in his jokes ; called on for a song ; fears expressed for the tympanum of Mr. Cradock's ear : the lecturer declineth, but volunteereth a recitation, and commenceth a laud on himself ; great applause expressed : description of the lecturer ; Paul freeth him from the charge of having pimples ; professeth great admiration of him, and falleth foul of Mister Christopher North for maltreating him ; taketh up the cudgels in his behalf, and saith pleasant things about his " Table Talk," a really admirable production. Mister Baldwin humorous ; Paul putteth a question to him, and asketh if he remembers seeing him one day with his kinsman, touching and respecting Ovid. Paul letteth the cat out of the bag, and can't help thinking that Mr. B. possessed a pleasing ignorance on the subject ; beggeth Mr. B.'s pardon, and requests him, like his great Editor, to publish a statement of his grievances. Subject continued.—Mr. Lamb called on for a song—giveth one of the " olden tymes." Mr. Barry Cornwall complimented by the company on his exceedingly beautiful poesy. Mr. Baldwin rises to propose a toast—" Success to the *London Magazine*, and confusion to its namesake ;"—John Scott hiccupeth a reply ; maketh the Editor of *Gold's Magazine* smart under

CHARLES LAMB

his satirical lash. Editor exceeding sensitive; apology for his writing nonsense; justified by the example of John Scott. Company in great good humour; lecturer jocose; Charles Lamb funny; requested to listen to the Editor's song; led as a Lamb to the slaughter. Paul commiserateth his situation. Editor or Propriety John asketh for the accounts of the sale of the magazine: his humour dashed by the infinite quantity of unsold copies. Mr. Baldwin weepeth at the intelligence; jeereth his Editor, &c.; and, in a fury of disappointment, quitteth the table. Propriety John's tribulation at his master's harshness; makes a face as long and unmeaning as the Prospectus of the Delphin Classics, and instantly retires. Party broken up. Reflections on magazines in general. *Blackwood's* the best of the day; Gold's *London Magazine* the next; Baldwin's the next, "sed longo intervallo:" aptly likened to a Dutch coal barge, Mynheer Van Scott the Palinurus thereof. Gold's *London* compared to a light English frigate in full sail, can tack and steer with every wind. Editor John heard to express his private opinion that Gold's was infinitely better than his own work; compliment to his candour, which, with a few "wise saws," moral reflections, and an appropriate apology to the public, concludes the "Paternoster Row Ovation."

In the year of our Lord 1821, on the third day of February, Messieurs Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, resolved to give a dinner-party to the contributors to their invaluable periodical. Of the fact we have no doubt, as it was communicated by a gentlemen who

was himself present at the ovation, and proposed it as a subject on which our Magazine might fructify tenfold. The news was soon dispersed throughout the Row, and great was the astonishment of the natives. Not, however, that a dinner was any rarity in that neighbourhood (for we have every reason to suppose that it is not), but that a party should be given in celebration of a losing concern, and the expenses paid out of the profits of the loss. Such, however, was actually the fact ; and when the day of carousal was fixed, men were sent out with the glad tidings of good joy, to all who had ever written, or caused to be written, articles or articlets in the Magazine ; and bipeds were stationed at the gates of the great city, to bid the literati to the feast.

On the morning of the ovation, a learned conference took place between the triumvirate of the firm, touching the propriety of transmitting an invitation to Paul Clutterbuck, late president of the defunct Déjeuné Club, as being one in the same line of business, or, as Horace more aptly says, "*Epicuri de grege porcus.*" This sensible proposal was instantly negatived ; and thus, like the

CHARLES LAMB

Barmecide's acquaintance, impransus Paul was compelled to feast upon visionary dishes in lieu of more solid aliment, make wry mouths over fancied delicacies, stick his knife and fork in the gizzards of imaginary woodcocks, and whet his whistle with a visionary glass of port, sherry, or Madeira. It was alleged in furtherance of the negation, that he had aspersed the credit of the *London Magazine*; "if it were so, it were a grievous fault"; and hinted his suspicions that John Scott was not quite so great a man as he was usually represented; an opinion which he grounded on certain dainty works, bearing his name and initials; such as the "Visit to Paris," and the "House of Mourning"; for the untimely death of which poem, his muse, we understand, has been in mourning ever since. The severity of this negation was, however, softened by a promise from the great men of Gath, that he should some time or other be specially invited to their domicile.

But it is ever thus with invitations;
They are the gay to-morrows of the mind,
Which never come.

The enormity of Paul's offence now stared

him as fully in the face, as Mr. Liston does the pit in Lubin Log. His contrition was accordingly intense. He had long thought of making a pilgrimage to the Row, in order to see the great men of whom report spoke so highly ; and, like all other pilgrims, bring heaps of good things away with him. Now, however, his intentions were frustrated. Like a pig in swimming, he had cut his own throat, committed suicide on his own wishes, and lost every opportunity of seeing the huge Leviathan of periodical writings. This disappointment brought on a slow fever, which was somewhat diminished by a refreshing sleep produced by the delectable article on Byron ; and if this number of our magazine is a bad one, let it be charitably attributed to the backslidings and indisposition of Paul Clutterbuck.

But stop ! what in the name of Minerva were we saying ? We are actually invited to meet the great Hannibal Tough, at a sort of Epithalamium, in the penetralia or Inner Temple of the Sadducees, where he will no doubt wanton, like Samson in his strength, with the pillars of brass surrounding him on all sides. "Like as the

CHARLES LAMB

hart panteth for the water-brooks," even so do we desire to see him. Gracious goodness, what great things do we expect from him ! Trite apophthegms, brilliant and deep-searching observations, cutting irony, pathetic anecdotes, all tumbling over one another, as they rapidly emerge from the lips of the editorial man of letters, the great intellectual gladiator, who in his last essay on the genius of Byron, has achieved so decisive a victory over common sense and judgment. Will the reader believe it ? our sensitiveness at these anticipations is truly astonishing. " *Vox faucibus hæret*," the few hairs that time has yet left upon our heads seem desirous of quitting their place of abode, and we are perpetually imaging to ourselves the appearance of the wise man of Gotham. This, however, is foreign to our purpose ; and though it is justified in some degree by the importance of the subject, we shall skip over the cross-ways and hedges of digression, and jump full tilt into the high-road of our main article.

An infinity of authors, of all sizes and descriptions, "from slashing Bentley down to piddling Tibbald," some to whom dinner

was an agreeable novelty, and some to whom it was none, were bidden to the festival. Grub-street emptied her stores, and despatched whole shoals of the ragged fraternity : and Paternoster Row wore the resemblance of Venice at the Carnival. The different booksellers were astounded at the unholy intrusion. Messieurs Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, "grinned horrible a ghastly smile," and raved a "whole hour by Shrewsbury clock," at such riotous visitations in a spot consecrated in eternal stupidity. Indeed we understand that a committee of publishers is to be appointed for the express purpose of searching into precedents for a dinner-party in Paternoster Row ; and as the generality of booksellers are *deep-searching* fellows, we have no doubt that they will find precedents enough to warrant their purposes.

With laudable forethought for authors in general, Messieurs Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, had appointed Thursday (clean shirt day) for the ovation, so that a pleasing show of linen, with a "goodly outside," adorned each corner of the dinner-table. Of the different delicacies we shall say nothing, as we doubt not their intrinsic

CHARLES LAMB

merit, and their infinite variety of flavour. Indeed it is remarkable how dinners improve as you verge towards the Mansion House, and the civic residences of aldermen. In every other corner of the metropolis they are considered of inferior consequence, but in the city they are the "summum bonum" of life, the only thing worth living for. This culinary improvement commences somewhere about the Row, and passes down Cheapside towards the Mansion House, where it reaches the climax of perfection ; " the force of dinners can no further go."

Gentle reader ! once again we beg pardon for our digression : age is garrulous ; and Paul Clutterbuck having attained the reverential epoch of threescore years, bating a brace of months, must be allowed some few of the privileges of antiquity. But to continue our narrative : at the conclusion of dinner, Mr. Baldwin was called unanimously to the chair, and under his auspices, " Teucro sub duce," the glass circulated with infinitely more rapidity than that unhappy periodical baptised the *London Magazine*. Our fears indeed for this work are exceeding great. We are apprehensive that it will

be consigned "to the tomb of all the Capulets," and sleep with its fathers, the blessed *London Mag.* of the eighteenth century, and that we shall be called on to pronounce its funeral eulogium. Well, well, requiescat in pace ; that it does even now ; and may no unhallowed wight disturb either its own or its readers' slumbers. At present, it waddles with unfeeling perseverance from the press like a goose from the grass market ; and though certainly plethoric in bulk, evinces every symptom of approaching dissolution. Of late these symptoms have visibly augmented. Its size is evidently increased but it is of a dropsical, not of a salubrious nature. It has accordingly been tapped by one or two critical doctors ; and, unlike all dropsical complaints, its body is discovered to be filled with milk and water, its head to be exceedingly weak, and its arteries to want that springy activity which indicates the possession of health.

When the virtues of the *Lon. Mag.* or *Scan. Mag.* or whatever else it may be called, had been efficiently discussed, and a few bottles of Mr. Baldwin's best port (we are told he has excellent wine) had been

CHARLES LAMB

emptied in laud thereof, Editor John, to the infinite marvel of his kinsfolk and acquaintance, waxed excessively facete, a proof that the age of miracles is not altogether past, as the success of the Delphin Classics (to whose Editor be all honour and glory, nonsense without end) more particularly evinces. We forget exactly what he is reported to have said, but are told, we can scarcely credit the assertion, that it was something uncommonly brilliant, and disarmed of its sting by that amiable meekness of disposition which its owner has of late manifested. Heaven forgive our nubilousness !! The Editor's joke must have been something incredibly facete, if we may judge from the discomposed muscles of the contributors ; for it is generally reported, that one who was bargaining for a situation in the Magazine, at fifteen guineas per sheet, was seized with such inveterate symptoms of the most confirmed risibility, that he was taken out in strong hysterics.—N.B. This well-timed laugh procured him his appointment.

When the merriment had partially ceased,*

* The Editor was the last who was in at the death of his own joke.

SIDELIGHTS ON

the reserve of the company began to diminish in exact ratio with the diminution of the bottles ; and the Lecturer, who, as every one knows, is not very particular in his jokes, was unanimously called on for a song : this he properly declined, in consideration of Mr. Cradock's left ear, who was seated next to him, but kindly volunteered the recitation of a Pindaric on himself, a proposal which was accepted with enthusiasm.

THE LECTURER SINGS.

Oh! I'm the gallant Lecturer, as all of you do know,
Who, with pen and paper, word and deed, make such
a raree show ;
I write and write, from spleen and spite, and when my
wit is vain,
I change the language of the joke and write it down
again.

With my flocci, nauci, nihili, pili, noodle, doodle,
Mummery, flummery, mimeny, pimeny, rorum.

My head, like petty bankers, (I speak it not in
fun,)
Can sign a check for small accounts, but cannot stand
a run.
'Tis ever open, day and night, for customers to
come,
But like the bank whose firm is gone, there's nobody
at home.

With my flocci, &c.

CHARLES LAMB

When first my youthful intellects were running all to
waste,
Some Dæmon whispered, (hang him for it,) "Hazlitt,
have a taste!"
So I got a taste for politics, and to secure the pelf,
As I knew the world lov'd prodigies, I wrote upon
myself.

With my flocci, &c.

But, alas! the Reading public have neither sense nor
taste,
For they let my youthful intellect, like poppies, run
to waste;
And tho' I wrote by day and night, (forgive me while
I weep,)
And never slept a wink myself, my readers fell asleep.

With my flocci, &c.

Then I marched up to my publisher in Paternoster
Row,
As Goldsmith says, "remote, unfriended, melancholy,
slow;"*
And slow indeed my volume sold,—more slow, alas!
than sure,
And hinted if I wrote for cash I always should be
poor.

With my flocci, &c.

In a rage then from the public I demanded restitution.
And humbugged them most nobly at the Surrey
Institution;

* Here the Lecturer was observed to put his hand
in his breeches pocket, like a crocodile, and produce
a kerchief, "more *holy* than righteous," wherewith he
wiped away the tears which were flowing in torrents
from his eyes.

SIDELIGHTS ON

I talked of poems, tales, and plays, for one delicious season,
But my lectures, like the Laureate odes, had neither rhyme nor reason.

With my flocci, &c.

My next book turned on politics, so constant and so true,
But was gathered to its fathers by the Quarterly Review.
Old Gifford roared in thunder, like a lion in his lair,
And placed me in his pillory, egad! and fixed me there.

With my flocci, &c.

Then loud the laugh against me turned, and "deeper, deeper still,"
While the stupid savage grinned at such an instance of his skill;
He showed me as a specimen, in terms of low abuse,
A kind of winged animal—a genus of the goose.

With my flocci, &c.

But I lash'd him for his impudence, and gross vituperation,
And call'd him (was I right my friend?) a torment to the nation;
And the public took my work so well, they came to me for more,
And like the Pit at Drury Lane, they bawled aloud,
"Encore!"

With my flocci, &c.

Then curse, for aye, the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews,
One filled my head with flattery, the other with abuse,—

CHARLES LAMB

One call'd me an ingenious hack, the other answered
"Nay ;"

And to my sorrow be it said, the "Nays" have got
the day.

With my flocci, &c.

But now, with Mr. Baldwin's leave, I'll end my comic
song,

And like young Rapid in the play, I'll "damme, push
along."

So here's a toast for all to drink, 'twill cheer the festive
scene,

And give a zest to merriment, 'tis—"Baldwin's
Magazine."

With my flocci, &c.

It reminds me of that image which no modern can
surpass,

For its skull is made of lead, and its face is made of
brass ;

And its head, like a fine Alderman of blessed name, is
"Wood,"

And its sense by Syntax privilege is sometimes
understood.

With my flocci, nauci, nihili, pili, noodle, doodle,
Mummery, flummery, mimeny, pimeny, rorum.

It is evident from this specimen that the
Lecturer is above vulgar prejudices ; but
notwithstanding his love for plain speaking
and writing, he is a very great man, and,
to our certain knowledge, is not the owner
of a single pimple, notwithstanding the
attack of Blackwood, from which his

SIDELIGHTS ON

Champion, John Scott, has so bravely delivered him. His example, indeed, on this occasion, inspired others with unusual brilliancy ; and Mr. Baldwin was forthwith delivered of divers good things, a fact of which no one would ever think of accusing him. The mention of this great man reminds us of an interview, which, in the innocence of our hearts, we once ventured to implore from him. Tremblingly, we ascended the stair-case that led to his apartment, and with prodigious veneration made a profound obeisance at his door. The Goliath of literature condescendingly returned the salute, and gave us certain valuable remarks touching a translation of Ovid, of which we were then about to be delivered. Heaven defend our want of orthodoxy ! but we actually dared to imagine that the first of the triumvirate possessed a pleasing inanity of mind on the subject in discussion. He exhibited, however, all the exterior symptoms of intense intellect. He shook his head, like Lord Burleigh, in the Critic, and evidently with as much success. But, gracious goodness ! we were actually going to hint that his upper story was still to be let, and was very much

CHARLES LAMB

in want of lodgers ; but we will not, no, we will not broach so infamous a heresy. Suffice it to observe, that, like the patriarch of old, we took up our staff and walked ; impressed in an uncommon degree with a deep admiration of the first great man we had ever seen.

“ My Muse, turn from him, turn we to survey ” where Mr. Charles Lamb, of antique memory, is tuning his pipes for a stave of the “ olden time.” The Editor observed that he was pregnant with something great ; and, like a useful midwife, hastened the moment of delivery. He accordingly besought of him one of the songs of Webster, to which was annexed the necessary clause, that it should be short and sweet ; a request which was cheerfully complied with.

SONGE TO FANCY, BY GOOD MASTER

WEBSTER

I've oftymes sayde in angry wille,

I'd do my beste endeavoure

To flie thyne odious charmes, but still

I love thee more than everre.

I wist not how the deuce it is

Thatte thou so long can'st charme me,

I'm sure there's nothing in thie phiz .

To dazzle or to warm me.

SIDELIGHTS ON

Saye, dost thou on a broomstick ryde,
Withe midnichte incantations,
That thus in spite of all mie pryde
I feel these queer sensations?

Well, use thie choicest modes, and try
To please my dying fancy ;
I'll bid thee once again good bie,
Oh ! antiquated Nancy !

Whene'er I see the rose decaye,
In spite of friendlie pother,
I fling the wrinkled leaves awaie,
And fondly plucke another.

Thus like the swift decaying rose,
Thou, thou art getting older ;
And I, as you may welle suppose,
Am consequently colder.

Thenne, once for alle, a long farewelle
'Tis time we both shoulde sever :
Old age has broke the amorous spelle,
And I am gone for ever !

Ah ! tears, my love ! Oh ! calm thie paine ;
Let not my errors grieve thee ;
My wandering hearte returns againe,—
I cannot, will not leave thee.

You lov'd me, whenne alone, forlorne,
I roam'd the wide worlde over,
You sooth'd mie soul by anguish torne,
And never proved a rover.

When winds were high, and clouds were dark,
On life's tempestuous ocean,
You were the pilot of my bark,
The heav'n of my devotion.

CHARLES LAMB

You sooth'd, you cheer'd me to the laste,
And well I mighte deceive thee,
If meanly reckless of the paste
I ever dar'd to leave thee.

No ! spyte of matrimonial strife,
And spyte of winde and weather,
We'll jog along the roade of life,
And die in peace together.

The poetry of good Master Webster, which, with all its quaintness of diction, had found so eloquent an advocate in the recitation of Charles Lamb, naturally introduced the subject of versification in general ; and Mr. Barry Cornwall was accordingly complimented by the company on the beauty of his poetical narratives. By this time the wine had diminished with orthodox celerity, and the company were in spirits for any frolic. The president accordingly rising, as well as his nerves would permit, proposed as a toast, " Success to the London Magazine, and confusion to its namesake." Mark ! reader, we beseech thee, the excessive cruelty of this sentiment, and let thy bowels yearn with compassion towards the sweet inoffensive Gentile, that the Philistines have so roundly attacked. Did we deserve this at their hands ! Did we ever, in thought, word,

or deed, say aught to the disparagement of the Infidels? Did we ever accuse the great Captain of the Banditti of being unusually dull in his articles? Why! to be sure we thought so. Did we ever tax the triumvirate with their miraculous draught of unsold copies? No! we had not the heart to insult their distress! Did we ever rate their periodical for waxing stupid? No! the fact spoke for itself! But we will not say a word more upon the subject; injured innocence always meets with champions; and we are eagerly on the look-out for a liege defender of the faith. Stop! we are somewhat oblivious! and were actually doing injustice to ourselves! In our *Déjeuné* we had the temerity to laud Baldwin to the detriment of Blackwood, and are well aware that the object of our commendation was unusually delighted with the praise. In an ecstasy of rapture he walked or rather flew to the publishers, and pulled the delectable article from the depths of his breeches pocket. It was read by all with transport, and many were the sides that were shaken from the mere outrageousness of risibility.

CHARLES LAMB

Reader : Mister Paul Clutterbuck, thus far will I go, and no father ; you are actually digressing again !

Paul : Gentle Sir, "pardon our camelion blushes," we "own the soft impeachment." Consider, Sir, the value of patience. Job was a great man !

Reader : Right, but he never read your article. But go on with your nonsense—this once I forgive you.

Paul : Nonsense, indeed ! Well, if one man writes nonsense, why may not another ! are we wrong in following the brilliant example of Baldwin in that popular commodity ? But this is an episode : to return to our topic ; the conversation of the company, that had commenced in whispers, was now elevated to a ululation, or species of the howl ; and the Editor, cheered by the unwonted merriment of the party, shouted out a proposition for the Magazine accounts. They were forthwith brought in, by the superintendent of the warehouse, who introduced an infinite catalogue of unsold copies, with a phiz of proportionate longinquity. An immediate consternation pervaded the whole of the party ; and Mr. Baldwin,

"with three paces and a stride," vanished like a ghost from the scene of conviviality. He was followed at a respectful distance by the redoubted Editor, whose absence completed the scene of confusion, and produced the dispersion of the company.

The narrative of this momentous ovation in honour of that "Flash in the Pan," the Flash Magazine, has brought us to the contemplation of Magazines in general. Blackwood is evidently the best of the day ; and were it not for his excessive egotism, would be, like Randall, a perfect nonpareil in his profession. But he is never so happy as when making faces at others, and complimenting, "with an idiot self-complacency," his own figure in print ; and perpetually calls to mind, with a trifling alteration, the beautiful apostrophe of *Mirandola* :

"My own sweet self—Oh! my dear, peerless
North,
By the stout sums I get as Editor,
I love you better, oh! far better than
Author was ever lov'd. There's not an hour
Of day or dreaming night but I am with thee ;
There's not a page, but speaks of thee, my self,
And not a head that dozes o'er thy book,
But in its very dozing proves the force
Of thee, my North, to thy North countrymen."

CHARLES LAMB

In spite, however, of such trifling drawbacks on his popularity, Blackwood, or his editor, Christopher North, Esq., is a writer of infinite merit. He has a ready fund of wit, humour, and whimsicality, which not even the great Egomet Bon-mot himself could attain, and fires away the small shot and cannon balls of his satire with unrivalled effect. The other engineers in the literary corps were incensed at such behaviour ; and accordingly an awkward squad of authors, headed by the redoubted Johannes Scott ipse, brought a huge cannon into the field of action, and the "Captain bold in Halifax," was the first to fire off a ten-pounder of his own moulding. This, as might be expected, failed of its mark, and the enemy is now as triumphant as ever. The roar of the cannon, however, served to frighten him a little at first, and it absolutely escaped his memory that the noise might probably terminate in *smoke*. Impressed with these notions, as also with a due sense of the adage—

"He who fights and runs away,
May live to fight another day,"

he girt up his loins and fled, while his sturdy

antagonist smote him as he retired with lusty and triumphant repercussions. What a trying time it must have been for Minerva and the Muses, when these two great men sought "the field of Mars." A bulletin was despatched every half hour to Parnassus, notifying the safety of the combatants ; and Apollo, when he rose the next morning, ran *à la deshabelle* to Baldwin's, to be assured of the salvation of his favorite children. Minerva also sent her owl to enquire after their health, and that mortals might be equally certified of their convalescence, a printed notification of their valour (the principal achievements being duly marked in italics) was sent round to the different tradesmen of the metropolis. At our excellent friend Hardham's, we saw the second statement introduced for the first time to the titillating embraces of an ounce of snuff, and an old Irish woman who purchased the two-fold treasures seemed regularly *up to snuff* ; for she observed with a pleasing elevation of the nose, that " considering the general posture of affairs, the statement was not *to be sneezed at.*"

Well, then, we have agreed that Black-

CHARLES LAMB

wood is the best Magazine of the day ; but what shall we say of thee, oh ! thou Dutch Burgomaster of literature, Baldwin's Magazine ! Say ? Why as Horace said of Mævius, that "Bœotum in crasso jurares aere natum." But there are really some admirable articles in the work—some redeeming touches of genius, whereat our astonishment is excessive ; not that they are good, but that they choose to reside in so bad a neighbourhood :

"The things we know are neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil they got there."

Some most delectable medical articles appeared the other day in Baldwin, supposed to be indited by one of the faculty. To be sure there was amazing faculty displayed therein, but unluckily the positions were all self-evident. They were at once our "bane and antidote" ; for they irritated us first, and then sent us to sleep by way of recompense.

But, gentle reader ! to mount at once the stilts of metaphor, hast thou ever seen ships "floating on the briny wave ?" If thou hast, seat thyself composedly in thy parlour ;

let thine imagination run riot, and make an ocean of thine own fancy. Hah ! it is already done. Thou hast got the ocean ready at command, and be it ours to diversify it with objects. We will be the showmen of thine imagination, the purveyors to the newly-painted Panorama of thy fancy ; and if thou wilt take a telescope in thine hand, " thou shalt see what thou shalt see ! " The mighty ocean before you is eternity ; its billows swell proudly to the skies ; the little barks that flit like spectres across its tides, are sailing onward to the haven of immortal fame ; and the winds that rave and bluster along the billows, are the breezes of popular opinion. Yon Dutch hulk that you see beating at distance to-windward, with her heavy sails flapping idly in the breeze, and her ponderous form wallowing about like a porpoise in the waters, is *Baldwin's Magazine* a newly-built Batavian brig, commanded by one Mynheer Van Scott, the Palinurus and Captain of the hulk. See how she flounders across the billows ! Her mate's name is " Flocci, Nauci, Nihili," who is voyaging onward to the shores of immortality. Now, turn thee to west, and behold with uplifted

CHARLES LAMB

eyes that beautiful little frigate in the distance. She is nearing gracefully to the sight, and moves along the waters like a thing of heaven. Her sails are full, and she actually veers within two points of the wind of popular favour. Hah ! she is already in sight of the Dutch brig ! She tacks—she changes her course, and passes with a side-wind to leeward. Her name is *Gold's London Magazine*, and she is replete with passengers for immortality.

But, hark ! the hollow thunder is howling along the murky arch of heaven ! and the tempest already commences. The wind blusters across the wave, and seems to sing a death-dirge to the ill-fated mariners. The Dutch brig is in distress ; she fires her signal-guns ; and, as a last resource, throws out her most useless lumber. Ten thousand copies of her Magazine are flung overboard, for the fish to peruse at their leisure, and still she is foundering in the deep. The frigate, too, is in danger ; but as there is less peculiarity in her figure, she braves the tempest with greater probability of safety. It is too late ! the Dutch hulk is lost ; she has gone down to see the wonders of the deep : and the

frigate, though terribly shattered, has reached the expected haven.

But our simile is at last concluded, and we must descend from the sublimities of metaphor, to the level of common sense. We have already written too tedious an article, and the morning is almost dawning in at the casement of our window. We commenced our account of the ovation at the witching hour of twelve, and the somnolent watchman is already drawling out past four o'clock. We have wasted then at least five good hours, and as many sheets of paper ; and, for aught we know, instead of making others laugh, may be laughed at ourselves. This, among others, is the privilege of an author ; of one who wears himself out in the service of the public, and meets in return with the contempt of all. While others are passing the night in healthful slumbers, he is reading *proofs* by the light of a sleepy candle ; (*proofs* at once of his industry and his vocation ;) and instead of enjoying the refreshment that nature has prescribed, is correcting the press at midnight, with the rushlight of a Printer's Devil ; and thus, without a metaphor, may be said "to hold a candle to the Devil." As

CHARLES LAMB

for ourselves, we commenced this article in excellent spirits, but have flagged most woe-fully towards the conclusion. Our cheerfulness is gone—the sting of our vocation is deeply fixed on our mind, and a consciousness of mediocrity withholds the cheering probability of eventual success. To the public we must apologise for having so long detained them ; and with this expression of our intense contrition, shall take the liberty of concluding the article.

There are some points in the foregoing article which seem to need elucidation. It would seem at first sight, from some passages in it, that it could hardly have been written by Wainewright. It is true that Lamb is treated in it (as he always was by Wainewright) very sympathetically, but on the other hand, the writer is very satirical at the expense of Scott and Hazlitt, for both of whom Wainewright elsewhere expresses much admiration. But, as the reader will remember, Scott, after encouraging Wainewright to contribute to the *London Magazine*, began, after a time “ to rap me on the head,

SIDELIGHTS ON

as one sees a cat deal with an elderly kitten which retaineth its lacteal propensities over due season." Perhaps this was done because Baldwin, the leading proprietor of the magazine, had objected to Wainewright's contributions. If this was so it would account for the epithet "Chastising Baldwin" in Bonmot's "Confessions," and for the various sarcastic remarks as to publisher and editor in the "The Literary Ovation." Hazlitt also had had a slight disagreement with Wainewright on a point of criticism with regard to the stage; and this may account for the attack upon him.*

"The Literary Ovation" appeared in the number of *Northhouse's Magazine* for March 1821. Scott was then dead, having fallen in the duel with Christie. It must, therefore, have seemed to the readers of the "Ovation" a very heartless thing to jest about him, as "Paul Clutterbuck" does. But there is an editorial note in the magazine which explains that the article was written some time before Scott's death, and was indeed in print before that event occurred.

* See Hazlitt's essay "On Vulgarly and Affectation."

CHARLES LAMB

It is curious that the song which Lamb is represented as singing or reciting—it is not quite clear which—should be attributed to so very unlikely an author as Webster. What makes it more curious is the fact that the same song—only differing in a few unimportant particulars—had been already published in *Northouse's Magazine* as one of "Sam. Quiz's" imitations of George Colman. As a parody of the style of the author of "Broad Grins" the verses might pass muster ; but assuredly they bear no resemblance to anything that John Webster did write or ever could have written.

As to the "Pindaric," which Hazlitt is represented as reciting, it is mainly a condensation of the malicious attacks upon him which were constantly appearing at the time in *Blackwood's Magazine*. Any stick was then good enough with which to belabour Hazlitt ; and the "Pindaric" was duly reproduced in the pages of "The Ebony." *

* In Hazlitt's essay "On the qualifications necessary to success in life," there is a passage which I am inclined to think refers to Wainewright. It is as follows :

"I never knew a man of genius a coxcomb in dress," said a man of genius, and a sloven in

SIDELIGHTS ON

dress. I do know a man of genius who is a coxcomb in his dress and in everything else.

It may seem strange that Hazlitt should style Wainwright a man of genius; and it needs an effort to conceive why he should have thought him such. But it must be remembered that, though he had no substantial claim to such an honour, he had a good many showy accomplishments, which might easily mislead those who knew him into a much too exalted estimate of his abilities. He was an excellent talker, an artist of some pretensions, and (as we have seen) a writer of much cleverness. Even Lamb thought and said that his prose was "capital." These reasons, I am willing to own, would weigh lightly enough if it were possible to think of any other personage of the time who would answer to Hazlitt's description: but, so far as I can tell, there was no one else whom Hazlitt could then have had in his mind. A few years later there were two distinguished men whom Hazlitt's description would have fitted—namely, the authors of "Pelham" and "Vivian Grey"; but neither of them in 1821 had become known to the public.

It is perhaps worth while to mention that Wainwright was the editor of the reprint of Marlowe's and Chapman's "Hero and Leander," which formed the eighth volume of the series of "Select Early English Poets," which was brought out under the superintendence of the Shakesperean scholar, S. W. Singer, in 1817-21. My friend, Mr. Drury, has a copy of the book just mentioned, the dedication of which has the name of Wainwright written below it. This dedication is "To the greatest genius born since the glorious day of Michel-Agnolo, Henry Fuseli," and is alone sufficient to identify the dedicator. There is

CHARLES LAMB

also an introduction of 66 pages, which is certainly by Wainewright, and which is sufficient to prove that he had a very good knowledge of, and a real appreciation of the Elizabethan poets and dramatists.

VII

GLEANINGS FROM THE "MONTHLY
REPOSITORY."

The Monthly Repository was originally started as an organ of the Unitarians, and was at first conducted mainly on sectarian lines. Its circulation was always very limited, and its influence consequently was small. About 1830, however, an effort was made to give it a more generally interesting character. Its editorship was entrusted to William Johnson Fox, then well-known as a fine orator, a radical reformer, and the popular preacher of South Place Chapel, Finsbury, where his memory is still held in great honour. Under his management the *Repository* became a very readable and well-written magazine. John Mill, Ebenezer Elliott, R. H. Horne, Thomas Wade, and C. R. Pemberton—the latter an actor, elocutionist, and writer, whose "Autobiography of Pel. Verjuice" ought to be better known

CHARLES LAMB

than it now is—were among its contributors, and helped to give it a special impress of earnestness and thoughtfulness. The editor was perhaps the first—or was at any rate one of the first—to appreciate adequately the genius of Robert Browning, and to express publicly his admiration for the great powers which he displayed in his “Paracelsus.” Notwithstanding the energy with which the magazine was conducted by Mr. Fox, it failed to secure a sufficient circulation; and in 1836 “Orion” Horne became its new editor. He, too, failed to render it attractive to the reading public of the time, and gave place in his turn to Leigh Hunt. The latter edited it from July 1837 to March 1838; but though he put much of his own best work into it, and had the assistance of W. S. Landor, G. H. Lewes, and other famous writers, he, too, failed to make it a success, and it ceased to appear after the last-mentioned date.

In the volume of the *Repository* for 1835 I have found several articles relating to Charles Lamb which seem to have escaped the notice of all who have hitherto written about him. These are all of much interest,

as the reader will, I think, presently acknowledge. The longest and perhaps most valuable of them is the following :

AN EVENING WITH CHARLES LAMB
AND COLERIDGE.

It is a good thing early to teach children a veneration for those above them ; above them not by the possession of derived honours, whether of rank or wealth, but of some inherent quality, developed in corresponding action, either of a moral or intellectual nature. It gives a beyond to the life of a child ; it assists in promoting that onward and upward tending which is the soul of progression. And although, too often, in the warmth of the heart's religion, it may offer up incense at an unworthy shrine,—although the idol may fail upon nearer communion, and the deified man or woman be found but mortal,—yet it still retains its faith, not to be wasted in fruitless disappointment, but to be cherished, enriched, and preserved—a precious offering, awaiting the advent of a worthier object to whom it may be dedicated. This feeling of veneration, early cultivated,

CHARLES LAMB

has a rich value in elevating the mind, and redeeming it from the bondage of that conceit of self which is a great stumbling-block to improvement; and beyond that, may be made a means of procuring some of the best and happiest sensations that mere reciprocity can bring. It adds a charm to reality beyond itself; it prepares the way for that reality till it becomes reality better worth having through its influence. How often has this been proved! How often, when a name has been mentioned that has signalled itself either as poet, patriot, actor, artist, or philanthropist, it has seemed to create a purer atmosphere around, and redeemed many a moment from the commonplace routine of mere matter-of-fact existence. To catch a glimpse of any one of these deified portions of humanity in the street has been sufficient to make the heart beat with doubled motion, and many a time has served to refresh the tired feet and send them on their way rejoicing. And when Fortune has been so dear a friend as to bring the chance of seeing them face to face,—of hearing them speak, perchance,—of having a word or look that one might appropriate (selfish this, but so it

has been)—the head has “grown dizzy at the thought,” and has revelled in anticipation as blessed as must have been that of an ancient mythologist at the thought of a banquet with the gods. It was during a worshipful time like this, upon a bright, sunshiny spring morning, worthy such an announcement, that a friend said, “Come to me next Tuesday, I am going to Charles Lamb’s—Coleridge is to be there—and you shall go with me.” My heart was on its knees the next minute, and for the two or three intervening days I trod on air ; I lived in a dream of some coming good, at times mingled with the fear lest it should never arrive. It was not to see these objects of worship in a crowd, where I might, perchance, hear a word, or catch a glimpse, as one does at the prime picture of an exhibition, between the chinks of people’s bodies, but to see them for hours uninterruptedly ; to see them in the character of friends to each other, when there would be no influence of the world upon them ; to watch them, listen to them, without losing look or word : to see Coleridge with the “Charles” of his sonnets, and the “Mary” of his songs ; to fill one’s ears with

CHARLES LAMB

the heart's talk of two poets, so much the purer for its being uncontaminated by the desire for fame. The time came nearer and nearer, and at last the very day, and I called for my kind pleasure purveyor, and we walked together to the well-remembered quaint-looking house by the canal, which had seen so many worthy of note pass along its banks, and, alas for the *absent*, one walk into itself instead,—one of the generation who, in their moods of abstraction, “know not their right hand from their left,” nor unstable water from *terra firmâ*. Rap at the door, with the heart beating quite as strongly; open—in—speaking in a whisper as if we had entered a cathedral. How difficult is it to give a faithful record of past impressions! Since those days, “old things have passed away, and all things are become new.” I am not the same I that I was then, and the two I's encounter on the way and stare at one another in strange bewilderment. It is not with the facts themselves, but with the inferences drawn from those facts, that change has been so busy. How he came, or when he came, or whether they were there when we entered, is all forgotten; but I have

them distinctly before me as if it were yesterday. Coleridge, with his clear, calm blue eyes and expansive forehead,—his sweet, child-like, unruffled expression of face,—his painful voice, which, in spite of all the beauties and treasures it was the means of bringing to you, had yet such an expression in its tone of long suffering and patient endurance as at first to prevent the sensation excited by his extraordinary power of conversation being one of perfect enjoyment. I had heard much of this power, but no description, however vivid, could give an idea of the uninterrupted outpouring of poetry in the spoken prose that streamed from his lips. It was a realisation of the fairy tale of the enchanted child; he never opened his mouth but out came a precious gem, a pearl beyond all price, which all around gathered up to hoard in the cabinet of their memories. His figure was tall and somewhat inclined to corpulency; its expression was, like that of his voice, one of suffering borne long and patiently. There was a certain air of dissatisfaction—no, unsatisfiedness—(how different are the two!)—which set the mind busily to work to dis-

CHARLES LAMB

cover why, with all the choice gifts with which genius had blessed him, he should not be entirely happy. The mystery has been since unriddled; he had never known the reality of love; he had dreamt of it in his poems, but while seeking to make his dependence upon it in his own existence, it had failed him. He was a slave to the laws which doom a creature, who has mated mistakenly, either to live for ever in joyless companionship, or to live a solitary in the depths of his heart's affections, without hope of possessing that one sympathy which is essential to the development of man's noblest, best, and most happiness-giving attributes. There was the secret of the painful voice and of the suffering form; and there, too, was the secret of his recourse to the dram of opium, that hypocritical thing which pretends to relieve the suffering which it eventually aggravates.

The character of Charles Lamb's person was in total contrast to that of Coleridge. His strongly marked, deeply lined face, furrowed more by feeling than age, like an engraving by Blake, where every line told its separate story, or like a finely chiselled

head done by some master in marble, where every touch of the chisel marked some new attribute. Yet withal there was so much sweetness and playfulness lurking about the corners of the mouth, that it gave to the face the extraordinary character of flexible granite. His figure was small even to spareness. It was as if the soul within, in its constant restless activity, had worn the body to its smallest possibility of existence. There was an equal amount of difference in his conversation from that of Coleridge, as there was in his person. It was not one uninterrupted flow, but a periodical production of sentences, short, telling, full of wit, philosophy, at times slightly caustic, though that is too strong a word for satire which was of the most good-natured kind. There was another essential point of difference. In Coleridge might be detected a certain consciousness of being listened to, and at times an evident getting up of phrases, a habit almost impossible to be avoided in a practised conversationalist. In Charles Lamb there was a perfect absence of this ; all that he said was choice in its humour, true in its philosophy ; but the racy fresh-

CHARLES LAMB

ness, that was like an atmosphere of country air about it, was better than all ; the perfect simplicity, absence of all conceit, child-like enjoyment of his own wit, and the sweetness and benevolence that played about the rugged face, gave to it a charm in no way inferior to the poetical enjoyment derived from the more popular conversation of his friend. Another difference might be observed ; that Coleridge's metaphysics seemed based in the study of his own individual nature more than the nature of others, while Charles Lamb seemed not for a moment to rest on self, but to throw his whole soul into the nature of circumstances and things around him. These differences served only to heighten the enjoyment of witnessing the long-enduring genuine friendship existing between the two,—the three (for why should " Mary " be excluded ?)—wrought out of mingling sympathies and felicitous varieties. In Charles Lamb, as in Coleridge, at times there was a melancholy in the face which partook of the nature of his individual character. It was not dissatisfaction ; it was not gloom : but it seemed to say that he had had more affection, more

gushing tenderness of feeling, than he had met with objects on whom to expend it. His "Dream Children" * is sufficient proof of this. Had he married his "Alice," had they been realities of little (the pun is irresistible) Lambs playing about him, this might not have been. How he would have joked with them, laughed with them, delighted to watch them for the sake of the thousand beauties he would have discovered in daily development ; though much more that they were the children of her whom he loved, transmitters of her loveliness and worth, so many receptacles of her soul, which they would bear down as a blessing to posterity, to give to others who should come after him the like joy which she had bestowed upon him. But then what would the world have done for want of his "Elia," for would he not have been engrossed with the "cares of a family," or with the sense of his own enjoyment ? Assuredly not ; they would have stimulated him to greater literary exertions, and we should have had such stories of happy love, such descriptions of summer gambols in the green wood and winter frolickings by the

* One of the papers of "Elia."

CHARLES LAMB

fire-side, Midsummer merry-makings and Christmas carollings, as would have made a gladsome echo through the world, and have taught it a lesson of which it is yet so ignorant, the nature and ministry of true and pure and devoted love. But what would have become of the following letter, with which we have been favoured, and which goes to prove that he was not all alone in the world—in his world, that is to say? It was written to a friend who had sent him a copy of the old romance *Astræa* :—"Dear C——. Your books are as the gushing streams in a desert. . . . 'Rank and Talent' you shall have, when Mrs. M—— has done with 'em. Mary likes Mrs. Bedinfield much. For me I read nothing but *Astræa* ; it has turned my brain. I go about with a switch turned up at the end for a crook ; and, Lambs being too old, the butcher tells me, my cat follows me in a green riband. Becky* and her cousin are getting pastoral dresses, and then we shall all four go about Arcadising. 'O cruel shepherdess ! inconstant yet fair, and more inconstant for being fair !' Her

* The servant.

SIDELIGHTS ON

gold ringlets fell in a disorder superior to order ! Come and join us. I am called the black shepherd. You shall be C— with a tuft.”—And what would have become of Mary and her pseudonyme budget, and where would have been the indivisible brother and sisterhood, the heart and home sharing they had together their whole lives through, the strong affection which defied all change of time or circumstance,—all, save the power of the great enemy who has now separated them ? Was he not cruel in so doing ? Would it not have been mercy to have made them sharers in death as they had been in life ? to have made them go hand in hand to their last quiet home together ?

Coleridge, on the evening in question, spoke of death with fear ; not from the dread of punishment, not from the shrinking from physical pain, but he said he had a horror lest, after the attempt to “shuffle off this mortal coil,” he should yet “be thrown back upon himself.” Charles Lamb kept silence, and looked sceptical ; and, after a pause, said suddenly, “One of the things that made me question the particular inspira-

CHARLES LAMB

tion they ascribed to Jesus Christ was his ignorance of the character of Judas Iscariot. Why did not He and His disciples kick him out for a rascal instead of receiving him as a disciple?" Coleridge smiled very quietly, and then spoke of some person (name forgotten) who had been making a comparison between himself and Wordsworth as to their religious faith. "They said, although I was an atheist, we were upon a par, for that Wordsworth's Christianity was very like Coleridge's atheism; and Coleridge's atheism was very like Wordsworth's Christianity." After some time, he moved round the room to read the different engravings that hung upon the walls. One, over the mantelpiece, especially interested his fancy. There were only two figures in the picture, both women. One was of a lofty, commanding stature, with a high, intellectual brow, and of an abbess-like deportment. She was standing in grave majesty, with the finger uplifted, in the act of monition to a young girl beside her. The face was in profile and somewhat severe in its expression, but this was relieved by the richness and grace of the draperies in which she was profusely enveloped. The

girl was in the earliest and freshest spring of youth, lovely and bright, with a somewhat careless and inconsiderate air, and she seemed but half inclined to heed the sage advice of her elder companion. She held in her hand a rose, with which she was toying, and had she been alive you would have expected momentarily to see it taken between the taper fingers and scattered in wilful profusion. Coleridge uttered an expression of admiration, and then, as if talking to himself, apostrophised in some such words as these : "There she stands, with the world all before her : to her it is as a fairy dream, a vision of unmingled joy. To her it is as is that lovely flower, which woos her by its bright hue and fragrant perfume. Poor child ! must thou too be reminded of the thorns that lurk beneath ? Turn thee to thy monitress ! she bids thee clasp not too closely pleasures that lure but to wound thee. Look into her eloquent eyes ; listen to her pleading voice ; her words are words of wisdom ; garner them up in thy heart ; and when the evil days come, the days in which thou shalt say ' I find no pleasure in them,' remember her as thus she stood, and,

CHARLES LAMB

with uppointing finger, bade thee think of the delights of heaven—that heaven which is ever ready to receive the returning wanderer to its rest.”

He spoke of the effect of different sounds upon his sensations ; said, of all the pains the sense of hearing ever brought to him, that of the effect made by a dog belonging to some German conjurer was the greatest. The man pretended that the dog would answer, “*Ich bedanke mein herr*” when anything was given to it ; and the effort and contortion made by the dog to produce the required sound, proved that the scourge, or some similar punishment, had been applied to effect it. In contrast to this was the homage he rendered to the speaking voice of Mrs. Jordan, on which he expatiated in such rapturous terms, as if he had been indebted to it for a sixth sense. He said that it was the exquisite witchery of her tone that suggested an idea in his “*Remorse*,” that if Lucifer had had permission to retain his angel voice, hell would have been hell no longer. In the course of the evening the talented editor of the “*Comic Annual*” made his appearance. He was then known

SIDELIGHTS ON

only by his Hogarthian caricature of "The Progress of Cant," upon which Coleridge complimented him. After some time he introduced many of his etchings, which were then unknown to the world, and they were the means of exciting in Coleridge the first genuine hearty laugh I had seen. If one had not admired entirely, it would have been enough to have made him envied. Laugh after laugh followed as the square tablets (trump cards in the pack of the genius of caricature) were laid upon the table, and a merry game it was for all. The effect was not a little increased by the extreme quietude of their master, who stood by without uttering a word, except with the corners of his mouth, where the rich fund of humour which had furnished the treat we were enjoying, was speaking more intelligibly than any words. He went, and the time went, and the supper went; and at last it was time for Coleridge to go too, for he had the walk to Highgate all before him. His friend begged earnestly that he might walk with him, but without avail. There was an affectionate parting, as if they had been boys rather than men, and it seemed to

CHARLES LAMB

concentrate their lives into that minute. It recalled the meetings and partings of other days ; the wanderings by the lakes ; the many minglings in social union ; a whole host of recollections seemed to crowd around and enclose them in a magic circle. Coleridge lingered on the threshold, as if he were leaving what had been a part of his heart's home for many years ; and again he who had been his companion in many a mountain ramble, many a stroll "in dale, forest, and mead, by paved fountain and by rushy brook, and on the beached margent of the sea," would fain have kept up the old companionship even though it was night, and the way had no such temptations. Another grasp of the hand, and a kiss of affection on Mary's cheek, and he was gone. I never saw him again ; and Charles Lamb and his sister but once since ; and that was a few months ago in the street. He had aged considerably, but it scarcely excited melancholy, for Mary was with him like a good guardian angel. They had that same country air freshness about them ; they looked unlike everything around ; there was an elderly respectability about them ; not the modern

SIDELIGHTS ON

upstart prig of a word, but the genuine old china, old plate, bright, black, mahogany air, which is now almost departed. I watched them earnestly ; a vague feeling that it was something I should never see again ; and so it has happened. He has followed his friend, and in time his sister will follow him ; and thus goes the world. The wise and the good, those we have looked up to from our childhood as something too high for our reach, like the stars above us, whose bright history we seek in vain to know, vanish from our sight, and leave us in darkness—no, not in darkness—their works have *not* followed them ; they live and breathe, and infuse new life and breath into those who come after them ; and many more are rising to fill their places, and the world is daily becoming purer and holier through their influence. Peace and a benediction upon their memories !

S. Y.

The reader, I hope, will agree with me that the above paper is one of no common interest and value. It is true that we are

CHARLES LAMB

rich in pen-pictures both of Coleridge and Lamb ; but were our knowledge of them, as gained from the writings of their contemporaries, ten times more copious than it is, we should still have reason to welcome such accessions to it as we find in S. Y.'s paper. That it is a true and authentic record cannot, I think, be doubted. It carries its own credentials in its contents, which have every appearance of being a sober and unexaggerated report of an actual experience.

But who was "S. Y." ? I wish I could tell the reader : but I must confess that I am quite unable to identify him. That he was a writer of marked ability is certain. The *Repository* for 1835 contains many other articles in prose and verse which bear his signature, most of which are of more than ordinary merit. As the reader, after having read the paper on Coleridge and Lamb, will, I hope, feel some interest in the writer of it, I will venture here to reproduce a lyric by him, which I own I am glad to find an excuse for reprinting. It is as follows :

SIDELIGHTS ON

MORNING, NOON, AND NIGHT

You ask if I love you :—

Listen !

The sun is above you ;

How the leaves glisten !

How the flowers glow with his cheering ray !—

Love is the sun that lights *my* way.

You ask if I love you :—

Yonder !

Where trees crowd above you

At noontide wander—

With woodland voices the depths are stirred—

You are my breath—my shade—my bird.

You ask if I love you :—

Hearken !

When night comes above you,

And shadows darken,

Gaze on the heavens in their starry light—

You are the heaven to bless my sight.

I cannot help thinking that this is a poem which is worthy to take its place in any anthology of English poetry ; and I shall be glad if its publication here should lead to its inclusion in future collections.

It is perhaps worth noting that the extract from a letter of Lamb's which appears in

CHARLES LAMB

S. Y.'s paper is from one which was addressed to Cowden Clarke, and which is printed in full in Canon Ainger's edition of the Letters. The reader who compares the two versions will find some variations in them, which are not, however, of much importance.

The paper of most interest (after the one printed above) in the *Repository* is the following :

MUSICAL COMMENTARIES AND COR- RESPONDENCE OF THE LATE CHARLES LAMB

"What !" exclaims the reader, "musical notices from him who confessedly had no ear ; who ever eschewed music, and all that thereunto appertained ! Come, this is a hoax." No, unbelieving Christian, it is no hoax : the lines are veritable Elian. The circumstances which gave rise to this extraordinary production were as follows :—Lamb, among his miscellaneous literature, had chanced upon Burney's History of Music, which, as was his wont in all cases, he read carefully through, and thus, though as *earless*, and as disinclined as ever to devote

himself to the tuneful goddess, his memory became involuntarily stored with the names and qualities of all who, "since Music, heavenly maid, was young," have knelt at her shrine. This impersonal knowledge he a few days afterwards showered, with ludicrously astounding effect, upon his friend Ayrton, himself a learned professor of the divine art, and who, like thee, gentle reader, had no conception that Elia knew aught of the matter. Delighted, however, to find (as he supposed) in his and our dear friend so distinguished an amateur, he entreated from Lamb, for private edification and entertainment, his opinions as to the "great masters" of music, which next day gave rise to the following :

"Some cry up Haydn, some Mozart,
 Just as the whim bites ; for my part,
 I do not care a farthing candle
 For either of them, or for Handel.
 Cannot a man live free and easy,
 Without admiring Pergolesi ?
 Or through the world in comfort go,
 Who never heard of Dr. Blow ?
 For my own part I never have ;
 And yet I eat, and drink, and shave,

CHARLES LAMB

Like other people. If you watch it,
I know no more of stave or crotchet
Than did the unspaniardized Peruvians,
Or those old, queer antediluvians,
Who lived in th' unwashed world with Tubal,
Before that dirty blacksmith, Jubal,
By stroke on anvil, or by summ'at,
Found out, t' his great surprise, the gamut.
I know no more of Cimarosa,
Than he did of Salvator Rosa,
Being no painter: and, bad luck!
Be mine, if I can bear that Gluck !
Old Tycho Brahe, or modern Herschel,
Had something in them, but what's Purcell ?
The devil, with his foot so cloven,
For aught I care, may take Beethoven ;
And if the bargain doesn't suit,
I'll throw him Weber in to boot !
There's not the splitting of a splinter
To choose 'twixt him last-named, and Winter.
Of Dr. Pepusch, old Queen Dido
Knew just as much, God knows, as I do.
I would not go four miles to visit
Sebastian *Back*, or *Bof*; which is it ?
No more I would for Bononcini.
As for Novello and Rossini,
I will not say a word about 'em ;
Except that we might do without 'em."

.

SIDELIGHTS ON

Lamb made the following report of the Westminster Abbey Festival, in a letter to a friend :

“ We heard the music in the Abbey, at Winchester Hill ! and the notes were incomparably softened by the distance. Novello's chromatics were distinctly audible. Clara was faulty in B flat ; otherwise she sang like an angel. The trombone and Beethoven's waltzes were the best. Who played the oboe ? ”

The following letter is of a long anterior date, and relates to very different topics ; we subjoin it in the assurance of providing a gratification for our readers :

“ Dear Hazlitt,

“ I was very glad to hear from you, and that your journey was so *picturesque*. We miss you, as we foretold we should. One or two things have happened, which are beneath the dignity of epistolary communication, but which, seated about our fire at night, (the winter hands of pork have begun,) gesture and emphasis might have talked into some importance. Something about R——'s wife, for instance, how tall she is, and that she visits pranked up like a queen of the May, with green streamers,—a

CHARLES LAMB

good-natured woman though, which is as much as you can expect from a friend's wife, whom you got acquainted with a bachelor. Some things, too, about *Monkey*, which can't so well be written,—how it set up for a fine lady, and thought it had got lovers, and was obliged to be convinced of its age from the parish register, when it was proved to be only twelve, and an edict issued that it should not give itself airs yet these four years ; and how it got leave to be called Miss, by grace : these and such like hows were in my head to tell you ; but who can write ? Also how Manning came to town in spectacles, and studies physic ; is melancholy, and seems to have something in his head which he don't impart. Then, how am I going to leave off smoking. O la !—Your Leonardos of Oxford made my mouth water. I was hurried through the gallery, and they escaped me. What do I say ? I was a Goth then, and should not have noticed them. I had not settled my notions of beauty. I have now for ever : the small head, the long eye, that sort of peering curve, the wicked Italian mischief, the stick-at-nothing-Herodias'-daughter kind of grace. You understand me. But you disappoint me in passing over in absolute silence the Blenheim Leonardo. Did you not see it ? Excuse a lover's curiosity. I have seen no pictures of

note since, except Dawe's gallery. It is curious to see how differently two great men treat the same subject, yet both excellent in their way : for instance, Milton and Mr. Dawe. Mr. Dawe has chosen to illustrate the story of Sampson exactly in the point of view in which Milton has been most happy, the interview between the Jewish hero, blind and captive, and Dalilah. Milton has imagined his locks grown again, strong as horse hair or porcupine's bristles, doubtless shaggy and black, as being hair "which of a nation armed contained the strength." I don't remember he *says* black ; but could Milton imagine them to be yellow ? do you ? Mr. Dawe, with striking originality of conception, has crowned him with a thin yellow wig, in colour precisely like to Dyson's, in curl and quantity resembling Mrs. Professor's : his limbs rather stout, about such a man as my brother or Rickman ; but no Atlas, nor Hercules, nor yet so bony as Dubois, the clown of Sadler's Wells. This was judicious, taking the spirit of the story rather than the fact ; for doubtless God could communicate national salvation to the trust of flax and tow as well as hemp and cordage, and could draw down a temple with a golden tress as soon as with the cables of the British navy. Miss Dawe is about a portrait of sulky F——, but Miss Dawe is of

CHARLES LAMB

opinion that her subject is neither reserved nor sullen, and doubtless she will persuade the picture to be of the same opinion. However, the features are tolerably like. Too much of Dawes! Wasn't you sorry for Lord Nelson? I have followed him in fancy ever since I saw him walking in Pall Mall, (I was prejudiced against him before,) looking just as a hero should look, and I have been very much cut about it indeed. He was the only pretence of a great man we had. Nobody is left of any name at all. His secretary died by his side. I imagined him, a Mr. Scott, to be the man you met at Hume's, but I learn from Mrs. Hume that it is not the same. I met Mrs. H—— one day and agreed to go on the Sunday to tea, but the rain prevented us and the distance. I have been to apologize, and we are to dine there the first fine Sunday! Strange perverseness. I never went while you staid here, and now I go to *find you*. What other news is there, Mary? What puns have I made in the last fortnight? You never remember them. You have no relish for the comic. Oh! tell Hazlitt not to forget to send the American Farmer. I dare say it isn't so good as he fancies, but a book's a book.

I have not heard from Wordsworth, or from Malta since. Charles Kemble, it seems, enters

SIDELIGHTS ON

into possession to-morrow. We sup at 109, Russel-street, this evening. I wish your brother wouldn't drink. It's a blemish in the greatest characters. You send me a modern quotation poetical. How do you like this in an old play ? Vittoria Corombona, an Italian lady, a Leonardo one, nicknamed the White Devil, being on her trial for murder, &c., and questioned about seducing a duke from his wife and the states, makes answer :

“Condemn you me for that the Duke did love me ?
So may you blame some fair and crystal river,
For that some melancholic distracted man
Hath drowned himself in it.”

Our ticket was a £20. Alas ! ! Are both yours blanks ?

‘N.B. I shall expect a line from you, if but a bare line, whenever you write to Russel-street, and a letter often when you do not. I pay no postage. But I will have consideration for you till parliament time, and franks. Luck to Ned Search, and the new art of colouring. Monkey sends her love, and Mary's 'specially.

‘Yours truly,

‘C. LAMB.

‘10th November, 1805.

‘P.S. Godwin has asked after you several times.’

CHARLES LAMB

Although the above paper contains little that will be entirely new to most Elians, I think the reader will agree with me that I have followed the best course in printing it in full. If the verses on the musical composers, as printed |above, be compared with the version in Canon Ainger's edition of the Works it will be found that there are a good many variations in them. Most of them, it is true, are of small importance, but they are sufficient to prove that the manuscript used by the writer in the *Repository* was not the same as that from which the Ainger version was printed. As the reader will no doubt have the means at hand of comparing the two versions, it is not necessary for me to dwell upon them ; but I will quote the last six lines from Ainger, inasmuch as it is in them that the most material differences occur.

I would not go four miles to visit
Sebastian Bach (or Batch, which is it ?)
No more I would for Bononcini,
As for Novello and Rossini,
I shall not say a word to grieve 'em,
Because they're living : so I leave 'em.

It will also be found that the letter to

Hazlitt, as printed above, differs very considerably from the version printed by Canon Ainger. In this case it is certain that both versions must have been derived from the same original ; and the reader will find it a rather instructive task to note how differently the same document will sometimes be dealt with by different editors. On the whole I cannot help thinking that the *Repository* text is the better of the two. It gives us, for one thing, two passages which are omitted in the Ainger version. These are the passages about Miss Dawe and her portrait of sulky F—— ; and the allusion to the lottery ticket. Surely it was an error of judgment to omit two such characteristic touches. Perhaps I ought to add that it was Talfourd, and not Canon Ainger, who was originally responsible for these omissions.

On page 626 of the *Repository* there is a notice of Lamb's "Rosamund Gray, &c.," then published in a new edition by Moxon. This is of so much interest that it must be quoted in full :

Adelightful companion-volume to the Essays of Elia. In addition to the pathetic tale of

CHARLES LAMB

'Rosamund Gray,' and the farce of 'Mr. H——,' it contains the Recollections of Christchurch ; the Dramatic Criticisms on Shakespeare and his Contemporaries ; the papers on Fuller, Hogarth, and George Wither ; and a variety of articles which originally appeared in Leigh Hunt's *Reflector*, a periodical which, though long since dead, remains embalmed in its own spice and fragrance. We take this opportunity of introducing the following few but valuable sentences, minuted down from the lips of the late S. T. Coleridge:

CHARACTER OF CHARLES LAMB, BY COLERIDGE

'Charles Lamb has more totality and individuality of character than any other man I know, or have ever known in all my life. In most men we distinguish between the different powers of their intellect as one being predominant over the other. The genius of Wordsworth is greater than his talent, though considerable. The talent of Southey is greater than his genius, though respectable ; and so on. But in Charles Lamb it is altogether one ; his genius is talent, and his talent is genius, and his heart is as whole and one as his head. The wild words that come from him sometimes

SIDELIGHTS ON

on religious subjects would shock you from the mouth of any other man, but from him they seem mere flashes of fireworks. If an argument seem to his reason not fully true, he bursts out in that odd desecrating way : yet his will, the inward man, is, I well know, profoundly religious. Watch him, when alone, and you will find him with either a Bible, or an old divine, or an old English poet ; in such is his pleasure.'

The value of this notice consists, of course, in its quotation of Coleridge's character of Lamb. I do not think that any editor of either Lamb or Coleridge has ever before reproduced it. It is needless for me to dwell upon the interest of the passage, which is honourable alike to the poet and the essayist. It sums up, as only Coleridge could have done, the essential and distinguishing qualities of its subject, and does it in a way with which Lamb himself would have been delighted. Coleridge, as we know, did not always succeed in keeping his utterances about Lamb entirely free from a suspicion of patronising indulgence ; but in these words, which were probably spoken not long before his death, we find nothing but

CHARLES LAMB

unstinted praise and cordial appreciation of his life-long friend. Saving the one regrettable misunderstanding between them, there is little in the history of English men of letters which is so beautiful as the mutual affection which existed between these two, who, in their personal characters, and in the nature of their genius, were so unlike, but who were nevertheless bound together by the strongest links of love and friendship.

On page 134 of the *Repository*, we find Lamb's letter to William Hazlitt on the birth of his son. As this differs only in a few small points from the same letter as printed in Canon Ainger's edition, it is hardly worth while to reproduce the whole of it here. Only one paragraph need be quoted. This is as follows :

Martin and the bard-boys join in congratulations. Love to Sarah. Sorry we are not within caudle-shot.

"Bard-boys" is given in Canon Ainger's version as "card-boys," which we may, no doubt, interpret as "Whist-players." "Caudle-shot" appears in Ainger as "candle-shot"—a printer's error, I suppose.

I think the reader will agree with me that the extracts I have made from the *Repository* were well worth rescuing from their obscurity. Old magazines commonly lie neglected in our libraries, and are very seldom referred to ; yet many of them contain matter of great interest, and sometimes of high literary value. There are few periodicals indeed—save those, perhaps, which are devoted to sectarian interests—which will not repay the reader for the time expended in examining them. In exploring them one finds the most unexpected things ; and whatever subject the inquirer may be interested in, he is almost sure to find in them something that will throw light upon it.

VIII

GLEANINGS FROM VARIOUS
SOURCES

A PRECURSOR OF LAMB'S "TALES FROM
SHAKESPEARE."

I do not think it has ever before been remarked that the Lambs were not the first to whom the idea occurred of making the plays of Shakespeare a medium of amusement and instruction for the young. Curiously enough it was a Frenchman, and not one of his own countrymen, who first hit upon the happy thought. I have now before me a book with the following title: "Contes Moraux, Amusans & Instructifs, à l'usage de la Jeunesse, tirés des Tragédies de Shakespeare. Par M. Perrin. . . . A Londres, chez Law, Robson, Cadell, and Elmsly. 1783." The compiler of this work was a teacher of the French language, who

had established himself in London. He dedicates his work to "Mi-lady Charlotte Finch," who was directress of the education of the children of George III. The list of subscribers to the book includes many members of the nobility and leaders of fashion of the time. The author's preface is very sensible and unassuming, though it reflects, naturally enough, some of the ideas then prevalent as to Shakespeare's want of art. M. Perrin deals with fifteen of the tragedies, including seven of those which are comprised in the "Tales from Shakespeare." The chief difference between the "Contes Moraux" and the "Tales" is that M. Perrin tells the stories less in the form of narrative and more in the way of dialogue than the Lambs do. Whether the "Contes" attained any degree of popularity I do not know; but it seems to me that the book was very well fitted for its special purpose, and might even now, with some revision, be used as a school text-book. There is no evidence to show that the Lambs had ever seen the Frenchman's book; but it seems not unlikely that it may have fallen under their notice. If they borrowed anything from it,

CHARLES LAMB

it could have been no more than the general idea ; still it seems only just to M. Perrin that he should receive the credit of having been the first in the field.

“THE ENCHANTED MIRROR.”

I have in my possession, a fairy tale, evidently intended for juvenile reading, which bears the following title : “The Enchanted Mirror, a Moorish Romance.” Salisbury, Printed and Sold by J. Easton. Sold also by E. Newberry, St. Paul’s Churchyard, London. 1799.” The story is dedicated in verse “To Mary.” I quote some of the lines :

On the state of the mind, and its functions, dear
Mary,
The wisest and best of philosophers vary :
Some assert that we’re born like a sheet of
blank paper ;
That within all is dark, without light, without
taper ;
And as soft bits of wax all impressions receive,
And communicate none ; so they firmly believe
That her aid from without instruction dispenses,
And the mind all its knowledge receives from
the senses :

SIDELIGHTS ON

That example, and habit, and culture, and art,
Form the temper and morals and model the
heart.

While some no less wisely and learnedly prate
On sentiment moral, ideas innate ;
That the mind like the sun of its own nature
bright,
Illumines the mass and communicates light.

* * * * *

When doctors so differ then what shall we do ?
Or how shall we sever the false from the
true ?

* * * * *

To experience we'll turn. So I now lay before
ye,
The "Mirror Enchanted," an old Moorish
story ;
In which you the truth of Pope's maxim will
find,
"It is education that forms the young mind,
And as the twig's bent, so the tree is inclined."

In Lamb's "Letter to an old Gentleman
whose education has been neglected" we
have, in the following passage, the image of
the sheet of white paper :

Your mind as yet, give me leave to tell you,
332

CHARLES LAMB

is in the state of a sheet of white paper. We must not blot or blur it over too hastily.

We have thus, in the dedication "To Mary," and in the passage just quoted, two points which seem at first sight to point to Charles Lamb as the author of "The Enchanted Mirror." They are, however, much too slight to be relied upon in the absence of other evidence. The story itself is an ingenious and well-told one. It shows more skill in narrative and invention than Lamb ever exhibited in his acknowledged writings. Therefore, though I should like to think that the romance was his, I must own that I do not believe he could have written it. I have thought it well, nevertheless, to record its existence here, in order that future enquirers may, if they choose, examine it for themselves.

"THE ADVENTURES OF TELEMACHUS."

I have in my possession a small juvenile book, the title of which is as follows: "The Adventures of Telemachus, Son of Ulysses. With four coloured plates. London:

SIDELIGHTS ON

Printed for B. Tabart. . . . No. 157, New Bond Street. . . . Price one shilling. 1807.

The booklet is rather superior in its "get up" to the ordinary run of juvenile books of the period, the coloured illustrations being evidently the work of a good artist. It consists of 69 pages of text, in addition to the four illustrations. It has no preface, and is without any indication as to its authorship.

When I first saw this little work the question at once suggested itself to me—"Is there any relation between it and Lamb's 'Adventures of Ulysses?'" Well, it has at least this relation to the latter that it preceded it in point of time, and so may have suggested the subject of his story to Lamb. It should be mentioned here that though the date on the title-page of "The Adventures of Telemachus" is 1807, the plates are dated "Dec. 1805." It is thus evident that "Telemachus" preceded "Ulysses" (the frontispiece of which bears the date of June 6, 1808) by something like two years and half. This is a fact which should be carefully noted for a reason which will appear presently.

CHARLES LAMB

On comparing the two works in order to see whether any indication as to the authorship of "Telemachus" could be gathered from the evidence of style, I came to the conclusion that there was nothing to forbid the idea that both might have proceeded from the same pen. There is, it is true, a warmth and liveliness of narration in "Ulysses," which is hardly to be found in "Telemachus"; but this, I think, may rather be attributed to the greater interest of the original story than to superior literary art in the writer. So far then the question was at least left open for further examination. At this point other evidence—or at least what appeared to me to be such—presented itself in a rather unexpected way. In his Preface to "The Adventures of Ulysses" Lamb begins by saying "This work is designed as a supplement to the Adventures of Telemachus. It treats of the conduct and sufferings of Ulysses, the father of Telemachus." It is surely a remarkable thing that Lamb should style his work a supplement to the Adventures of Telemachus. To treat the adventures of the father as a supplement to those of the son is surely a reversal of

the ordinary practice. It is also a reversal of the natural order from another point of view, for Fenelon would not have claimed to precede Homer even as regards literary merit. How then shall we explain Lamb's curious expression? If he had already written a work upon the Adventures of Telemachus, it would then be natural for him to speak of his "Adventures of Ulysses" as a supplement to the former work : otherwise I see no reason why he should use so peculiar an expression.

The fourth chapter of "The Adventures of Ulysses" relates the doings of the hero in the island of Calypso ; and herein we find a passage which seems to go some way towards showing that Lamb was the author of "The Adventures of Telemachus." After a description of the island Lamb proceeds :

It were useless to describe over again what has been so well told already ; or to relate those soft arts of courtship which the goddess used to detain Ulysses ; the same in kind which she afterwards practised upon his less wary son, whom Minerva, in the shape of Mentor, hardly preserved from her snares when they came to the Delightful Island

CHARLES LAMB

together in search of the scarce departed Ulysses.

I need hardly say that Homer tells us nothing of any temptation of Telemachus by Calypso, whom indeed he never brings into contact with her. All this is the invention of Fenelon. Why then does Lamb refer to it? He says in his Preface that the merit of his book belongs to Chapman rather than to himself ; and there was quite enough material suited to his purpose in the old poet's translation, without drawing upon Fenelon's courtly fiction.

There are other passages in " The Adventures of Ulysses," which seem to prove that Fenelon's " Telemachus " was almost as much in Lamb's mind as Chapman's Homer when he was writing his " Ulysses." The reader should refer to the eighth chapter of the latter work, where he will find a passage in which Minerva informs Ulysses of the events which have happened in Ithaca during his absence. This, again, is derived from Fenelon and not from Chapman. All these things make it at least certain that Lamb had a minute acquaintance with

Fenelon's work, and constantly referred to it while writing his "Ulysses." Yet one would think that the Frenchman's fiction was one which would hardly have attracted Lamb's attention for its own sake. So artificial a production could have had little interest for him, unless some extraneous reason caused him to study it. It is true that the book in Lamb's time was a good deal used as a school-book, and it is therefore possible that he may have thus become acquainted with it; otherwise I cannot think that he would, without some special inducement, have studied it so carefully as he evidently did. The natural inference from the various considerations I have urged would seem to be that Lamb was in all probability the author of "The Adventures of Telemachus."

As it is likely that the reader will think that in the above argument I have somewhat overstated my case I will at once confess that I have written rather as an advocate than a judge. Whether the facts warrant the conclusion which I have drawn from them I will not pretend to decide. If the reader allows that I have made out a case,

CHARLES LAMB

that is all perhaps that I am entitled to claim. Whether Lamb did or did not write the little booklet is rather a matter of curiosity than of much importance. His reputation in either case would be neither lessened nor increased. I have, therefore, felt myself at liberty to indulge more freely in conjecture and speculation upon the subject than would perhaps have been quite legitimate if the matter at issue had been of a more serious nature.

“MR. H——”

The following notice of the first performance of Lamb's farce is taken from a magazine entitled *Monthly Literary Recreations*. It appeared in the number dated December 1806.

MR. H.—, AN ENTERTAINMENT IN TWO ACTS

This piece met with the fate which is most justly merited: it was condemned. A prologue, full of real humour and wit, excellently well delivered by Mr. Elliston made us hope better things, and we confess that for the first two or three scenes our curiosity was excited, and the first act, owing to the exertions of Mr. Elliston and Miss Mellon, went off tolerably smooth,

SIDELIGHTS ON

until the last scene. In the second act, Mr. H——, the hero of the piece, who had before concealed his name on account of its disgusting vulgarity, blunders it out himself, and the appellation of Hogsflesh is made known, and immediately a string of the most stale puns and proverbs are let loose upon it. Here all the interest vanished, the audience were disgusted, and the farce went on to its very conclusion almost unheard, amidst the contending clamours of silence ! hear ! hear ! and off ! off ! off ! The piece was, however, given out for a second representation, but was afterwards withdrawn by the author.

Of course the cause of the damnation of "Mr. H——" was that the expectations of the audience were raised to too high a pitch. It is usually bad policy for a dramatist to keep his audience in ignorance of any essential point of the plot. Had the hero's name been communicated to the audience in the first or second scene of the farce, it is likely that they, being let into the secret, would have enjoyed the attempts of the various characters to penetrate the mystery. Their disappointment, when it proved that the portentous name was no more than a varia-

CHARLES LAMB

tion of one of the commonest of surnames, was perhaps pardonable. To use an expressive bit of slang they felt themselves "sold." Yet they were surely rather unreasonable. To label a piece as a farce is to give notice to the audience that it is an entertainment in which they are not to expect a strict adherence to nature and probability, but are to pardon many extravagances, provided only that they tickle the fancy and excite laughter. "Mr. H——," I think, stands this test very well ; and if briskly acted before an audience with a little imagination and willingness to be amused without too closely inquiring why, it ought to afford a good deal of pleasure to them.

It is possible that if Lamb had used the material of "Mr. H——" as a story instead of a farce the result would have been more satisfactory to him. It is easy, as a matter of fact, to make a tolerably amusing story from it. The feat was accomplished in 1835 by a certain "J. I.," who under the title of "Mr. H., or Beware of a Bad Name," published his version in a periodical of the time called *The Parterre* (vol. ii. p. 204). The plagiarist, who gave no hint that his story

was founded on Lamb's farce, did his work not unskilfully. Probably it put a guinea or two into a not too well-filled purse ; and we need not now wax indignant over the writer's dishonesty.

LAMB'S LETTERS TO MANNING.

Canon Ainger, in his edition of the Letters of Lamb, begins the letters to Manning with one dated Dec. 28, 1799. But it is plain that the following letter (No. XLVII.) should precede it, for it is evidently Lamb's first letter to Manning. This is proved by the whole tone of it : but see particularly the last sentence of it—" I must not prove tedious to you in *my first outset*, lest I should affright you by my ill-judged loquacity."

It is also to be remarked that two other letters of Lamb to Manning are misplaced in Canon Ainger's edition. These are the letters numbered L. and LIII., which certainly ought to change places. This is proved by the fact that Lamb says in No. LIII.—" I begin to think you atheists not quite so tall a species !" Manning's reply to this letter is now in my possession,

CHARLES LAMB

and in it he begs Lamb not again to call him an atheist, because he suspects that his letters are sometimes opened during their passage through the post. In the letter numbered L. Lamb says—"Huzza, boys ! and down with the Atheists !" which is evidently his response to Manning's request.

"STORIES AFTER NATURE," BY C. WELLS

In Mr. W. C. Hazlitt's "Lamb and Hazlitt" there is a letter (p. 133) to the author of a volume of stories, a presentation copy of which had been sent to Lamb. Mr. Hazlitt appears to have been unaware that this letter was addressed to Charles Wells, on the publication of his "Stories after Nature." It is interesting to know that Lamb appreciated and valued these charming stories, which very few did at the time of their first publication. In the letter he styles them "bright little stories," and says that both he and his sister have been much pleased with them. The fact that 'Stories after Nature' was the book thus praised is proved by the following passage—" 'Edward and Edmond,'

and the last tale of all, are the favourites"—the story named being part of the contents of the book.

DAISY PIE.

I recently purchased a copy of Hone's "Every Day Book" in the original parts. Some of these have, on the back cover, the Editor's "Notices to Correspondents." Among these I found the following on the cover of Part 5 :

"J. M." is a wag. His 'derivation' reminds the Editor of an observation the other day by his witty friend, Mr. LION. Being pressed to take some rhubarb pie, Mr. L. declined because it was physic ; on reply that it was pleasant and innocent, he rejoined "so is a daisy, but I don't therefore like daisy pie." "Daisy pie ! who ever heard of daisy pies ?" "My authority is Shakespeare ; he expressly mentions daisies *pied*."

Can it be doubted that the "Mr. Lion" of this story was Lamb ? The story is much too characteristic of him to be open to question. It is evident that Hone, by printing "Lion" in capitals intended to suggest

CHARLES LAMB

the punster's real name. Of course it is unnecessary to add that Lamb was a friend of Hone, and a contributor to "The Every Day Book."

LAMB A YEARNER AFTER MOUNTAIN SCENERY AND A COUNTRY LIFE !

In the *Oxford University Magazine* for March 1835, there is an article and also a poem on Charles Lamb, which were occasioned by his then recent death. Both were evidently intended by their writers to be sympathetic and appreciative, though, as will be seen, their praise is rather offensively mingled with censure on a point which might surely have been passed over in silence. The most curious thing, however, in both pieces is the strange misconception which they display with regard to one of Lamb most pronounced characteristics. The writer of the prose article tells us :

It is well known—as well known, at least, as anything concerning him—that he was not happy, and that the latter part of his life especially, was disfigured by some excesses which it is impossible to excuse. It is strange

SIDELIGHTS ON

that the plot of his own longest poem should turn upon the vice to the allurements of which he yielded, and that the evil consequences of such indulgence should be as strongly set forth there as it is possible they should be : but such is the case. . . .

The most remarkable feature, perhaps, in the character of Charles Lamb, and a very remarkable one it is, was the deep love of, the strong yearning after mountain scenery and a country life, which is known to have been the cause, or one of the chief causes of his unhappiness : in the words of Coleridge :

—he had pin'd
And hunger'd after nature many a year
In the great city pent, winning his way
With sad yet patient soul, through evil and
 pain
And strange calamity.

In his own works we find everywhere the marks of this feeling : the beautiful lines in his tragedy, of which Hazlitt tells a story, that Godwin having some recollection of them, tried in vain to find them in the old poets, and at last applied to their author for assistance, are full of this feeling.

Of the poem " To the Memory of Charles

CHARLES LAMB

Lamb" which follows the prose essay, all that can be said is that it might possibly have been worse. The writer was evidently so destitute of the sense of humour that it was impossible for him to understand or appreciate the humourist Elia. Had Lamb ever met him he would have wanted to feel his bumps, even as he wanted to feel those of the Comptroller of Taxes.

The following extracts from the poem will give the reader a good idea of its tone and spirit :

Farewell, kind Spirit !—like a summer cloud,
With no ungentle gloom hath Death come
down

All calmly on the sunshine of old age :—
And now thou sleepest. From the far-off land
Of hills and rivers thou didst love in youth,
Perchance upon thy dying ear there fell
Voices and mystic sounds, with cadence strange,
That spoke in thrilling whispers of the time
Of youth's high-breathings, manhood's energies.

Thy lot was hard, Benevolent Old Man—
Most hard indeed :—thou wouldst have pitched
thy tent

Where a lone streamlet wells from out its urn
Of moss-clad rock, there gladly listening

SIDELIGHTS ON

The quiet music of the mountain winds ;
And tuning thy full soul to such high themes
As most befit an holy Worshipper
At Nature's inmost shrine ; and feeding there
Thy natural cheerfulness with those fair forms
That move in peaceful gladness on the earth,
Or float like golden vapours through the air !

Thy lot was hard, Benevolent Old Man,
Most hard indeed ! Within the City pent,
That vast and mighty city, thou didst walk
A cheerless exile from thine own bright land.
There thy soul sicken'd at man's selfishness,
Thy soul recoil'd within itself ; for men
Knew not the language that it spoke ; they
spurn'd
Those shadowy hopes, and phantasies, and
loves
That were thy boyhood's dreams ; for thou
hadst been
A priest in Nature's temple,—while the crowd
Were hurrying on to those accursed halls,
Where cold Suspicion hath usurp'd the
throne—
The ancient throne of Wisdom ; and hath
taught
Her baneful lessons of distrust and hate,
Uprooted all our old ancestral ties,
And banish'd charity and mutual love.

CHARLES LAMB

All this was heavy on thee, Mild Old Man ;
A mournful gloom was round thy spirit hung ;
And yet thou didst not shun the company
Of thy less-gifted brethren ; though thy soul
Yearn'd for the open fields and liberal air
To walk in idle freedom. As the sun
That struggles all day long with Autumn fogs,
Shrouds in a misty mantle its bright form,
Then darts its burning splendours far and
wide

O'er hill and dale :—So from thy spirit's gloom
Thy native gaiety of heart burst forth
With a most pleasing lustre, that dispell'd
The clouds of sadness gather'd on thy brow !

I dare not to regret thee, Mild Old Man !
For a cold void was in thy heart ; and thou
Didst vainly strive, by most unhallow'd means,
To win oblivion of thy lot : a cloud
Pass'd on thy gentle spirit : thou didst strive
To make thy blood run boundingly again :
And oft didst catch, in phrenzied impotence
At that receding many-coloured veil
That hung between the real world and thee,
But now thou sleepest in the dewy earth,—
And he who died for thee bids us hope,
With an undoubting faith that all is well.

Considering the irritation which Lamb
showed at being called "gentle" by Coleridge,

SIDELIGHTS ON

it is easy to conceive how much annoyance he would have felt could he have perused the above-quoted passages of well-meaning inanity. One can almost see him as his anger rises at the various epithets bestowed upon him. "Kind spirit" he might perhaps have endured ; but "Benevolent Old Man" would have provoked him to the use of quite unparliamentary language ; while "Mild Old Man" would have reduced him to a state of speechless indignation.

Perhaps some of my readers may think that I am a little unjust to the author of the lines I have quoted. His intentions, it cannot be doubted, were good ; and was not Lamb, they may ask, "gentle," "kind," "benevolent," and "mild" ? Well, mildness, I think, was hardly one of his characteristics, nor was he by any means always gentle ; but the other epithets may be allowed to pass. Yet one feels that they are inexpressive and inappropriate as applied to Lamb, because they were rather the accidental than the essential qualities of his nature. He shared them with thousands of his contemporaries who were no wise distinguished in any other way. All the virtues Lamb possessed—

CHARLES LAMB

and they were many—would not have sufficed to keep his name alive had he not also possessed that quality, so difficult to define, but so unmistakable in its manifestations, which we term genius. To praise him, therefore, as the writers in the *Oxford University Magazine* do, for his moral virtues, with only a casual recognition of his peculiar genius, is as if one should praise Shakespeare for the prudence and business ability which enabled him to accumulate a considerable fortune, while omitting to mention his greatness as a poet and dramatist. No one who is conscious of the possession of powers which are unique, or which few share with him, cares to be complimented on the facts that he is a good husband and father, and pays his debts honestly and punctually. These are qualities which, if not as common as they ought to be, are at least so common that it is rather a reproach to a man that he does not own them, than a matter of praise that he does possess them. Lamb, as I conceive his character, was a good son, a good brother, and a good friend, because he was such by virtue of his natural disposition, and it would have been doing

violence to it had he acted otherwise than in accordance with the better impulses of his mind and heart. His genius, on the other hand, though that also was partly a natural endowment, required to be sedulously cultivated at the cost of much time and study, and often at the sacrifice of that liking for social intercourse, which was one of his most characteristic traits ; and it was something therefore on which he might legitimately pride himself. I am not, of course, saying that when we are making a complete survey of Lamb's character, we may not take into consideration his admirable moral qualities : I only desire to point out that our first concern with him, as with any author, is with his writings. I almost doubt if any author ever lived who would not rather have been complimented on his literary talents than on any other good quality which he might have possessed. The only exception I can at present think of is Congreve, if there is any truth in the anecdote which represents him as telling Voltaire that he would rather be visited as a private gentleman than as a famous author. Even in his case it may well be doubted whether he spoke with

CHARLES LAMB

entire sincerity. Possibly the remark was provoked by some piece of maladroit flattery on the part of his visitor. Praise on the score of his writings was as grateful to Lamb as it is to almost all authors ; but he would have listened impatiently, had he listened at all, to any one who thought to flatter him on account of his life-long devotion to his afflicted sister.

Is it necessary to say anything on the two other points on which the writers in the magazine enlarge, viz., the fact that Lamb sometimes exceeded the limits of strict temperance, and the other "fact" that his life was rendered unhappy by his yearnings for a country life, and for mountain scenery? The second point may be dismissed with the remark that nobody would have been more astonished than Lamb himself if he had been informed of the yearnings in question. As to the allusions to his intemperance which are so unnecessarily introduced into the article and the poem, it is enough to say that Lamb, during the greater part of his life, was probably more temperate in his habits than most of his contemporaries. So far indeed was temperance from being then

SIDELIGHTS ON

generally considered the virtue that it now is, that the man who on proper occasions declined to indulge in the customary festivities ran a serious risk of being considered an unsocial and unamiable companion. Intoxication, provided it was not habitual, was then regarded as nothing more serious than material for a good-humoured jest. If the reader is not satisfied with this plea, let him remember that a craving for stimulants is so frequent an accompaniment of the literary temperament that one would be almost justified in declaring that there is an intimate if not inseparable connection between them.

SONNET ON CHARLES LAMB

BY SIR EGERTON BRYDGES

The following sonnet is now published, I believe, for the first time. I copied it from a manuscript of Sir Egerton Brydges, which was formerly in my possession.

Of humour quaint, yet mild, benevolent,
Sincere, thou didst delight in fabled rhyme
Of older days, the mirror of the time
When dramatists their magic spirit spent
In strains that to the heart profoundly went:

CHARLES LAMB

Not that thy voice did as an echo chime,
But as if born by nature to prefer
The depths of Jonson or of Massinger !
Simple in life, of independent breast,
Thou hadst no pride, or vanity, or guile,
The outward lips the inward man would test,
Thy very soul was in thy gentle smile !
Serene the beamings of thy being run,
And set in brightness like an autumn sun !

ANOTHER SONNET ON LAMB

The following sonnet is from the pages of a small volume, entitled "The Mahabuleshwar Hills, and other Poems, by the Indian Chaplain. For Private Circulation only." There is no date to the volume ; but one of the poems is dated 1861 ; and I should guess that the book was printed some time between that date and 1870. It contains a series of "Sonnets on the Poets," among whom are included Mrs. Browning, Mrs. Hemans, Keats, Shelley, Byron, and Lamb. The sonnet on Lamb is one of the best of the series ; but there is a note appended to it which is perhaps more interesting than the poem. What is most notable in the latter is the ingenuity which the

SIDELIGHTS ON

author displays in rhyming "weary" and "dreary" with "*marinere* ? He." It is true that the choice of rhymes in this case was rather limited: still there were "beery," "bleary," "cheery," and "query" to draw upon. It may be suspected also that it was the exigences of rhyme which caused the writer to apply the epithet "laughter-flinger" to Hazlitt—surely as inapposite a one as could well have been chosen. However, it is rather ungracious thus to find fault with the poet, whose sonnet is not without good feeling and pathos, whatever its technical defects may be. I suppose it is hardly necessary for me to say that the writer was under some misapprehension as to the Lambs living in their patron's kitchen. They *may* have done so at one period; but it was certainly not there that the "awful event" alluded to occurred.

CHARLES LAMB*

Long time the Poet lived of life a-weary,
All, all were gone, the "old familiar faces,"

* See Lamb's original verses, "The Old Familiar Faces," and his inimitable "Essays of Elia." He died 27th December, 1834.

CHARLES LAMB

And of its whilom loveliness no traces
Lit the lone earth : with full heart sad and
dreary
He sought his friends, but empty were their
places.
“ Where now he cried the *Ancient Marinere* ?
He
Sleeps with the dead in Christ ! time's halt-
less race is
Run out with him whose voice was like a
spell :
And where art thou, keen-thoughted laughter-
flinger,
Hazlitt, my heart's own brother ? O, farewell !
Vainly I seek ye : Death's effacing finger
Hath swept ye one by one : each hallowed
spirit
Hath gone the land of life and love to herit,
Hark ! they are calling—doth Elia linger ? ”

The “ pensive gentility of Samuel Salt,” eulogised in an essay entitled “ Old Benchers,” was a relative of the present Sonnetteer. Lamb's parents were servants to him, and contrived to scrape together no small fortune out of their “ indolent and procrastinating ” master. Charles was sent to Christ's Hospital, and afterwards put in business by Mr. Salt. In the third essay, speaking of himself in the third person, he

SIDELIGHTS ON

says, "his patron lived *in a manner* under the paternal roof," which being interpreted, is—his parents lived in his patron's kitchen! In that kitchen occurred the awful event which first betrayed the taint of hereditary insanity in Mary Lamb, and darkened her and her brother's remaining years. *Lovel*, spoken of in the "Old Benchers," is *Lamb*, the poet's father, and Mr. Salt's *valet*. The "narratives of Elia" are, verily and confessedly, "but shadows of fact—verisimilitudes, not verities."

VERSES ON LAMB

The following verses are reprinted from the number of *Temple Bar* for July 1886. To say that they are altogether adequate to their subject would be saying too much for them; but I confess that to me they seem much better than most of the verse-tributes to the memory of Lamb. Even Wordsworth's verses on him seem (to me, at least) to strike a false note here and there; and few of the other writers who have dealt with the subject have escaped the Scylla of commonplace or the Charybdis of false sentiment. It appears to me that the writer of the following lines has happily avoided

CHARLES LAMB

these dangers, and has contrived to write about Lamb without the effusive gush of indiscriminating praise or the Pecksniffian airs of the over-righteous, who, in the spirit of Pope's Atticus, mingle their eulogy with laments at his sad want of piety and his deplorable habit of occasionally overstepping the limits of strict sobriety.

CHARLES LAMB

A small, spare man, close gaitered to the knee,
In suit of rusty black whose folds betray
The last-loved dusty folio, bought to-day,
And carried proudly to the sanctuary
Of home (and Mary's) keeping. Quaintly wise
In saws and knowledge of a bygone age,
Each old-world fancy on a yellowed page,
Tracked by the "smoky-brightness" of his
eyes,

Shone new-illuminated ; or in daring flight
That outvied Ariel, his spirit caught
The reflex of a rainbowed cloud, and taught
The glories of a Dreamland of delight !
A haunter of the bookstalls ! Even now
We listen for the eager, stammering speech
That clenched a happy bargain,—think to reach
And clasp those nervous fingers—watch the
brow

Grow lined with trouble at another's pain

SIDELIGHTS ON CHARLES LAMB

His large-souled sympathies had made his own,
Or linger till the bitterness had flown
And low-toned laughter proved him bright
again.

This man's identity, so sweet, so clear,
Could never die with death. We do not say
"I should have loved him had the self-same
day

But found us living," but "I hold him dear
Now, at this moment" ; and if patient ears,
Wrapped in God's silence, dimly now and then
Catch echoes of the grateful love of men,
Charles Lamb rests happily thro' all these
years.

M. E. W.

LIST OF LAMB'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE "LONDON MAGAZINE "

[The articles in the following list which are without a signature are signed "Elia" in the magazine. Those with a different signature in the magazine have that signature added here. Those articles which are now first attributed to Lamb are distinguished by a *.]

	PAGE
Recollections of the South Sea House . Vol. 2,	142
*Review of Bernard Barton's Poems	
(<i>No signature</i>)	194
Sonnet to the Author of the Poems published under the name of Barry	
Cornwall * * * *	302
To R. S. Knowles, Esq., on his Tragedy of Virginius. <i>C. Lamb</i>	302
Oxford in the Vacation	365
The Ape * * * *	402
Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years ago	483
The Two Races of Men	623
New Year's Eve Vol. 3,	5
Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist	161
*Verses to Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Browne on their publication of Wordsworth's "Excursion" in Octavo	
(<i>No signature</i>)	165

LAMB'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO

	PAGE
A Chapter on Ears	Vol. 3, 260
All Fool's Day	,, 361
Sonnet by Charles Lamb (<i>They talk of Time and of Time's galling Yoke</i>)	,, 367
*The Confessions of H. F. V. H. Dela- more, Esq. <i>Henry Francis Vere Harrington Delamore</i>	,, 383
A Quakers' Meeting	,, 384
The Old and the New Schoolmaster	,, 492
My Relations	,, 611
Mackery End, in Hertfordshire	Vol. 4, 28
Jews, Quakers, Scotchmen, and other Im- perfect Sympathies	,, 152
The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple	,, 279
Witches and other Night Fears	,, 384
Grace before Meat	,, 469
My First Play	,, 603
Dream Children. A Reverie	Vol. 5, 21
Dramatic Fragment * * *	,, 53
On some of the Old Actors	,, 174
Distant Correspondents	,, 282
The Old Actors	,, 305
The Praise of Chimney Sweepers. A May-Day Effusion	,, 405
A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis	,, 532
Detached Thoughts on Books and Read- ing	Vol. 6, 33
Reprints of Elia (A note in "The Lion's Head" respecting the Reprint of his "Confessions of a Drunkard")	,, 99
Confessions of a Drunkard	,, 117
A Dissertation on Roast Pig	,, 245
A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behaviour of Married People	,, 261

THE "LONDON MAGAZINE"

	PAGE
The Old Actors:	
Mr. Suett	Vol. 6, 349
Mr. Munden	„ 350
Modern Gallantry	„ 453
The Gentle Giantess	„ 529
The Miscellany:	
*Scraps of Criticism (<i>No signature</i>)	„ 563
Rejoicings on the New Year's Coming of	
Age: <i>Elia's Ghost</i>	Vol. 7, 5
A Character of the late Elia. <i>By a Friend</i>	„ 19
The Miscellany:	
*The Choice of a Grave (<i>No signature</i>)	„ 95
*Wilks	„ 97
*Obituary: Pietro Pinto Popolino	
(<i>No signature</i>)	„ 97
*Milton	„ 218
Old China	„ 269
Ritson <i>versus</i> John Scott the Quaker	„ 445
Poor Relations	„ 533
The Child Angel. A Dream	„ 677
The Old Margate Hoy	Vol. 8, 21
Nugæ Criticæ. By the Author of "Elia":	
No. 1 Defence of the Sonnets of Sir	
Philip Sydney. <i>L.</i>	„ 248
Letter of Elia to Robert Southey, Esq.	„ 400
Guy Faux	„ 477
Nugæ Criticæ. By the Author of "Elia":	
No. 2. On a Passage in <i>The Tempest</i> . <i>L.</i>	„ 492
Amicus Redivivus	„ 613
Blakesmoor in H——shire	Vol. 10, 224
Original Letter of James Thomson	„ 463
Captain Jackson	„ 481
Biographical Memoir of Mr. Liston	
(<i>No signature</i>)	Vol. 1, N.S. 17
A Vision of Horns	„ 29

LAMB'S CONTRIBUTIONS

	PAGE
Letter to an Old Gentleman whose Education has been neglected . . .	Vol. 1, N.S. 95
Unitarian Protests: In a Letter to a Friend of that Persuasion newly Married	,, ,, 183
Autobiography of Mr. Munden. <i>Joseph Munden</i>	,, ,, 231
Reflections in the Pillory . . .	,, ,, 368
Barbara S——	,, ,, 511
The Last Peach. <i>Suspensurus</i> . . .	,, ,, 593
Quatrains to the Editor of the Everyday Book. <i>C. Lamb</i> . . .	Vol. 2, ,, 16
The Three Graves (<i>No signature</i>) . .	,, ,, 41
The Superannuated Man. <i>J. D.</i> . .	,, ,, 67
The Wedding	,, ,, 217
The Convalescent	,, ,, 376
Imperfect Dramatic Illusion . . .	,, ,, 599
*The Sorrows of an Ass (<i>No signature</i>)	Vol. 3, ,, 95
*A Hint to Whist Players. <i>Thomas Pam</i>	Vol. 4, ,, 102
*An Appeal from the Shades (<i>No signature</i>)	Vol. 5, ,, 527

INDEX

- Address spoken by Miss Kelly*, 189
Address to the Mummy at Belzoni Exhibition, 73
Adventures of Telemachus, 333-9
Adventures of Ulysses, 334
 Agnus, 167
 Ainger, Canon, 216, 315, 323-4
 Ainsworth, W. H., 18
All Fools' Day, 217
Another Ladleful from the Devil's Punch-bowl, 257
Appeal from the Shades, An, 140, 151
Ass, The (Sonnet on), 162
 Ayton, Richard, 16

 BALDWIN, Cradock, and Joy, 2, 261, 262, 263
 Barton, Bernard, 12, 76, 77-87, 123
 Beaumont and Fletcher, 40
 Benyon, Thomas, 12, 13
Blackwood's Magazine, 2, 7, 240, 255, 256, 257, 282
Blaize Fitztravesty, 257
 Boccaccio, 23
 Bonasoni, Julio, 21
 Bonmot, Egomet, 228, 283
 Booker, Luke, 88
 Bowring, John, 12
 Braham, John, 248
Bride, The, of Modern Italy, 221
Broad Grins Travestied, 238
 Browne, Sir Thomas, 40
 Brydges, Sir Egerton, 354

- Burney's *History of Music*, 315
 Burton, R., 40
 Byron, Lord, 26, 53, 239
- CAMPBELL, J. Dykes, 101
 Carlyle, Thomas, 16
 Cary, Rev. H. F., 12, 13, 14
Champion, The, 4
 „ *Poetical Recreations of the*, 5
Chapter on Ears, A, 249
 Chaucer, Geoffrey, 63
 Chesterfield, Lord, 71
Choice of a Grave, The, 109
 Christie, J. H., 7, 8
 Clare, John, 12, 37, 176, 247
 Clarke, C. C., 315
Clutterbuck, Paul, 258, 261
 Coleridge, Hartley, 12
 „ S. T., 53, 163, 259, 296-312, 325, 349
 Colman, George, 260
Confessions of a Drunkard, 49
Confessions of an English Glutton, 257
Confessions of a Cantab, 257
Contes Moraux . . . tirés des Tragédies de Shakespeare,
 329
Cornelius van Vinkbooms, 30
 Cornwall, Barry, 13, 279
 Coulson, The Admirable, 221
Country Sketches, 259
 Cunningham, Allan, 12, 167, 216
- Daisy Pie*, 344
 DARLEY, George, 16, 129
 Dawe, George, 320
 „ Miss, 320
Day at the Mill, A, 259
Death—Posthumous Memorials—Children, 56
Decay, The, of Beggars in the Metropolis, 245
Delamore, H. F. V. H., The Confessions of, 92

INDEX

- Delicate Intricacies, The*, 247
 De Quincey, 10, 31, 120, 121, 255
Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading, 48
Drakard's News, 4
Dramatic Fragment, 99

Egomot Bonmot, 30, 228
 Elton, Charles Abraham, 12, 120, 165
Enchanted Mirror, The, 331
Epistle to Elia, 168
Evening, An, with Charles Lamb and Coleridge, 296-312
Examination of the School of Southside, 255

Fancy, The, 50
First Notes of an Incipient Ballad-Metre Monger, 257
 Fox, William Johnson, 294, 295
 Francis, Sir Philip, 10
 Fuller, Thomas, 40

Garden of Florence, The, 50
 Godwin, William, 26, 322
 Goethe, 18, 19
Gold's London Magazine, 245, 262
 Gower, 63
 Gray, Thomas, 104

 HARE, J. C., 167
 Haydon, B. R., 249-51
 Hazlitt, William, 12, 36, 44, 119, 202-15, 262, 272, 275,
 290, 291, 318, 321, 327, 357
 Hazlitt, W. C., 30, 44, 47, 101, 119
Herbert, Edward (J. H. Reynolds), 14, 167
Hint, A, for Whist Players, 131, 132, 153
 Hogarth, William, 23
 Hone's *Every Day Book*, 344
 Hone, William, 345
Honeycomb, W., 126
 Hood, Thomas, 11, 15, 16, 17, 46, 51, 150, 153, 222
 Horne, R. H., 295

INDEX

- Howell, James, 107
 Hume, Joseph, 44
 " Mrs., 321
 Hunt, Leigh, 126, 221, 295
 Hunt and Clarke, 130
- Idler's, The, Epistle to John Clare*, 176
Immortality in Embryo, 259
 Indian Chaplain, The, 355
- "*Janus Weathercock*," 30, 31, 32, 45, 48
Jews, Quakers, Scotchmen, and other Imperfect Sympathies, 119
John Woodvil, 27, 100
- KEATS, John, 10, 24, 191, 192, 251
 Kelly, Miss, 189
 Kemble, Charles, 321
- Lælius*, 196
 Lamb, Charles, continual references to, throughout the volume
 Lamb, Mary, 38, 321, 358
 Lang, Andrew, 9
Last Peach, The, 122
Letter, A, to an old Gentleman whose education had been neglected, 121, 122, 128, 332
 Lichtenberg, 23, 24
Liston, Mr., Biographical Memoir of, 115
Literary Police Office, The, 52
Literary Ovation, The; or, the Row in an Uproar, 261-89
 Lockhart, J. G., 7
London Magazine, continual references to, throughout the volume
 Lucas, E. V., 97
- MANNING, Thomas, 319, 342
Memoir of a Hypochondriac, 30, 254
Midsummer, A, Night's Dream, 257

INDEX

Milton, John, 105, 116, 320
 Mitford, John, 123
Miscellany, The, 101, 109, 118
Mohock Magazine, 7
 Montgomery, James, 166
Monthly Repository, The, 294-328
 Moore, Thomas, 53
Morning, Noon, and Night, 314
Mr. H—, 339-42
Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist, 131
Mother's Lament, The, 83
Musical Commentaries and Correspondence of the late
Charles Lamb, 315-22

NELSON, Lord, 321
 Newcastle, Duchess of, 40
New Monthly Magazine, 240, 256
New Year's Eve, 213
Northouse's London Magazine, 240, 257
Note to Elia on the "Passage in the Tempest," 197
 Novello, Vincent, 318
 „ Clara, 318
Nuns, The, and Ale of Caverswell, 216
Nuptials in Jeopardy, 257
Nuptials out of Jeopardy, 257

Obituary, 111
Ode to Master Izaak Walton, 223
Old Mortality, 207
On a late Empiric of "Balmy Memory," 116
On some of the Old Actors, 120
On the Melancholy of Tailors, 215
Oxford University Magazine, 345

Past and Future, The, 213
 Patmore, Peter George, 16, 150, 214
 Perrin, Mons., 329
Peveril of the Peak, 206
Poet's Thanks, A, 123

INDEX

- Poole, John, 12, 15
Popolino, Pietro Pinto, 112
Precursor, A, of Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare," 329
 Procter, B. W., 12, 21, 150, 167, 192, 202, 216, 221
 Praed, W. M., 131
Prodigious Success of the Déjeuné, 259
- QUARLES, Francis, 167
Quiz, Sam, 258, 259, 291
- Recollections*, 82
Reflections in the Pillory, 98
Reflector, The, 215
Reminiscences of Juke Judkins, 122
 Reynolds, John Hamilton, 12, 50, 51, 167, 188
 Rickman, John, 151
 Robinson, H. C., 188
 Rogers, Samuel, 53
Rosamund Gray, 25, 26, 324
- SALT, Samuel, 357
 Scott, John, 3, 8, 129, 212, 261, 262
 Scott, Sir Walter, 53, 205-212
Scraps of Criticism, 102-9
 Shakespeare, 59, 106, 329
 Smith, Horace, 12, 55, 149
 Soane, George, 12
"Some Passages" in the Life, &c., of Egomet Bonmot,
 228
Songe to Fancy, 277
Sorrows of an Ass, 153-62
 Southern, Henry, 130
 Southey, Robert, 53, 129
Stanzas addressed to Percy Bysshe Shelley, 86
Stories after Nature, 343
- TALFOURD, T. N., 5
 Taylor and Hessey, 10, 19, 125
 Taylor, John, 49, 119

INDEX

- Temple Bar*, 358
Thelwall, John, 4
Tickler, The, 255
To Charles Lamb (Verses by Cary), 181
To Elia (Sonnet by Bernard Barton), 185
To Elia (Sonnet, anonymous), 185
Traditional Tales, 15
Twelfth Night, or What you will, 216

Valentine's Day, 216
Verses to Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 89
Vision of Horns, A, 128
Voltaire, 352
Voyage, The, 114

WAINWRIGHT, Thomas Griffiths, 16, 21, 28, 32-43, 49
 124, 227-58, 289, 290, 292
Webster, John, 277, 291, 322
Wells, C., 343
Wilks, John, 111, 115
Winter Evening's Fireside The, 259
Wordsworth, William, 6, 32, 53, 81, 89-91, 120, 250,
 255, 321

Y——, S——, 296-314

Books Written or Edited by
Bertram Dobell



Small 4to, cloth extra, finely printed on
hand-made paper, 7s. 6d.

THE POETICAL WORKS
OF
THOMAS TRAHERNE, B.D.
1636?–1674

Now first published from the original Manuscripts

The discovery of the poems contained in the above volume, after they had remained unknown and unregarded for more than two centuries and a quarter, is one of the most remarkable literary events of recent times. They are the work of a truly fine poet and prose-writer, whose productions will henceforth take their place beside those of Herbert, Vaughan, and Crashaw, and will be

Books Written or Edited by Bertram Dobell

equally valued by all who care for the writings of those poets. They were, in fact, believed by the late Dr. Grosart to be the work of Henry Vaughan, and he was, at the time of his death, preparing to publish them as the work of the Silurist. It has been my good fortune to discover their real author, and thus to add a new name to the long roll of illustrious English poets. Traherne was a very interesting character as well as a fine poet. His manuscripts, which are now in my possession, give many details of his private life; and from these and other sources I have been able to compile a fuller account of him than might have been expected.

ROSEMARY AND PANSIES

"There's rosemary for you, that's for remembrance; pray, love, remember: and there's pansies, that's for thoughts."—HAMLET, Act iv. sc. v.

Early in 1901 I printed an edition of seventy-five copies only of the above volume of poems for private circulation. The book having been received with much more favour than I expected, I have determined to reprint it, though with a good many omissions and large additions. The book will be published in April or May next. The price to subscribers will not exceed half a crown.

Books Written or Edited by Bertram Dobell

THOMSON'S (JAMES "B.V.")

POETICAL WORKS

With Memoir and Portrait. 2 vols., post 8vo,
12s. 6d.

THOMSON'S (JAMES) THE CITY
OF DREADFUL NIGHT

AND OTHER POEMS

16mo, cloth, 3s. 6d. ; or in parchment binding
gilt top, 5s.

THOMSON'S (JAMES) BIOGRAPHI-
CAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES

Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s.

THOMSON'S (JAMES) SHELLEY

A POEM

With other Writings relating to Shelley, and an
Essay on the Poems of William Blake

[Out of print]

Books Written or Edited by Bertram Dobell

GOLDSMITH'S (OLIVER) A
PROSPECT OF SOCIETY

Now first printed from the unique original; with
an Introduction and Notes. Small 4to
buckram, 2s. 6d.

SHELLEY'S (P. B.) ALASTOR
AND OTHER POEMS

A Facsimile Reprint. Edited for the
Shelley Society

SHELLEY'S (P. B.) THE
WANDERING JEW

Edited for the Shelley Society

THE ELIA LIBRARY

THIS Series, so named because it will consist only of works which Charles Lamb would have valued and taken an interest in, will comprise Old Plays, Poems, and Prose Writings of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. Among the Old Plays will be several which have never before been printed. The Series will not include any works which are now in print, or which can be easily obtained.

Detailed Prospectuses will be ready shortly





UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 256 159 5

